

# COMMUNITAS

## Global Perspectives



“At SCIS, global **perspectives** are not simply a part of our taught curriculum, they are reflected in who we are, how we learn, and how we live together each day.”

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“SCIS has been the **bridge** that brings our children closer to the world—helping them to know it, understand it, and love it without fear.”

# PAFA NEWS

SCIS has parent organizations called the Parents and Friends Association (PAFA) on each campus. PAFA serves as a way that parents can communicate ideas for the betterment of the school to the administration and Board. SCIS is proud of the high level of parent participation in their schools and values their partnership with the parent community. PAFA conducts various activities, from community events to charity fundraisers to volunteer support for teachers and students. Each campus has a PAFA board who works closely with each campus' administrations to plan events that help to make SCIS Campuses a unique experience for families, faculty, and students alike. We are always welcoming new members!

For more information about PAFA, please contact us at:

## HONGQIAO MAIN & ECE CAMPUSES

### President

Alicia Ooi  
pafa-hq-pres@scis-china.org

### Vice President

Jamie Thibideau  
Cindy Huang  
pafa-hq-pres@scis-china.org

### Events Team

April Wang      You Jin Lee  
Cindy Huang      Jeongwon Kim  
pafa-hq-events@scis-parent.org

### Upper School Rep (11-12)

Silvana Kojongian  
pafa-hq-us@scis-china.org

### Upper School Rep (9-10)

Jamie Thibideau  
Merry Yang  
pafa-hq-us@scis-parent.org

### Upper School Rep (6-8)

Nicole Roberts  
pafa-hq-us@scis-parent.org

### Communications Coordinator

May Botha  
pafa-hq-communications@scis-china.org

### Lower School Reps

Debbie Foster  
Dani Trebbe  
pafa-hq-ls@scis-parent.org

### ECE Reps

Joey Wong  
Lucky Le  
pafa-hq-ece@scis-parent.org

### Treasurer

Sherly Gao  
pafa-hq-tres@scis-china.org

## PUDONG CAMPUS

### President

Silvia Gatti  
silviagatti@scis-parent.org

### Treasurer

Chelsea Cheung  
chelseacheung@scis-parent.org

### Events Coordinator

Maria Fernanda Espinosa  
leonardotapia@scis-parent.org

Deergha Shah Chaudhary  
deerghachaudhary@scis-parent.org

### Communications Coordinator

Maria Jose Verduzco  
mariaverduzco@scis-parent.org

## communitas

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Editor: Shuting Zhang

Art Director: Mun Yee Choo

Designer: Alles Zheng

Do you have a story to tell, a project to share, or art to be displayed? Let Communitas be a platform for your voice.

Communitas is about community and we rely on contributions from the SCIS community.

Should you have any comments, observations, wish to submit articles, or inquire as to ways to collaborate, feel free to send all inquiries or correspondence to the Communitas editor via email at [communications@scis-china.org](mailto:communications@scis-china.org)

Communitas is published three times per year for the SCIS community, our friends, and the larger Shanghai community.

We are social! Feel free to visit us on the web at [www.scis-china.org](http://www.scis-china.org) and follow us!



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# Global Perspectives: More Than a Curriculum, A Way of Being

At SCIS, global perspectives are not simply a part of our taught curriculum, they are reflected in who we are, how we learn, and how we live together each day. As a three-programme IB World School, SCIS is proud to welcome families from over 50 countries. This remarkable diversity is not just marked by flags or highlighted on posters, it is woven into the foundation of our students' learning journey.

The IB mission challenges us to develop internationally minded individuals who recognize their shared humanity and act to create a better and more peaceful world. At SCIS, that mission is more than an ideal, it lives in our classrooms, our conversations, and the relationships built among students, educators, and families from across the globe. Fostering global perspectives means cultivating empathy, curiosity, and a willingness to engage with difference.



One of my favorite reminders of this spirit comes during our United Nations Day and United Nations International Day of Peace celebrations. These special days are filled with color, music, and pride as students wear traditional dress and share in joyful celebrations of their cultural heritage. Inspirational student speeches share the incredible perspective students have gained as SCIS Dragons in such a dynamic, international environment.

Yet what stays with me most is what happens the very next school day when our students return to school in uniform, once again sitting side by side. That simple moment is deeply symbolic. It reminds us that while we come from many places, we stand united as one SCIS community, rooted in shared values of respect, inquiry, and care. We are not simply a collection of identities, we are a collective, learning and growing together.

Of course, a global perspective is not built in a single celebration. It is cultivated in the rhythm of everyday learning, in the books our students read, the questions they explore, the languages they speak, and the friendships they form. Whether discussing migration in a Grade 5 Unit of Inquiry, engaging in student-led service learning, or reflecting on identity in Theory of Knowledge, SCIS students are continually challenged to see the world through many lenses.

As educator and philosopher Nel Noddings reminds us, "The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think." At SCIS, we strive to achieve this every day through our Mission: to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring learners who contribute positively to their communities.

We know we've succeeded when our students demonstrate that they can

think critically, care deeply, and act with integrity. Our students are not only learning about the world, they are learning how to make it better.

Together, as a school community, we have the privilege and responsibility of shaping these global citizens. And in doing so, we help shape a more connected, compassionate world.



*By Daniel Eschtruth,  
Director of Schools  
at SCIS*

# Strengthening Learning *Through* Curriculum Review

At the heart of SCIS's commitment to excellence is a dynamic and ongoing curriculum review process. This critical initiative is not only a cornerstone of our strategic plan but also plays an essential role in school improvement efforts aligned with accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and our evaluation processes within the International Baccalaureate (IB) framework.

Over the past year, we have successfully completed comprehensive curriculum reviews in Mandarin, Mathematics, Science, and The Arts. Each of these reviews involved deep reflection, evidence-based research, and thoughtful collaboration across all divisions and campuses.

Recently, our school community is engaged in the review of Physical and Health Education and English. These reviews, like those before them, are being carried out by dedicated committees composed of educators and administrators from Early Childhood, Lower School, and Upper School across the Pudong and Hongqiao campuses. As Director of Teaching and Learning, I've been privileged to work with so many dedicated teachers and curriculum coordinators who have given their time and expertise so generously to ensure these reviews are successful.



One of the most empowering aspects of our curriculum review process is the school's commitment to investing in professional growth and high-quality teaching tools. Each committee is supported with a generous budget to access resources and training opportunities that enhance teaching and learning. A powerful example of this investment emerged from our Math curriculum review. The committee identified a need for increased confidence and expertise among Early Childhood and Lower School homeroom teachers. In response, the school organized 10 hours of professional development with world-renowned math educator Dr. Jo Boaler from Stanford University. This training significantly enriched the teaching of mathematics across our campuses.



An essential component of every curriculum review is the examination of current academic standards. Committees carefully assess whether our existing standards are still the best fit for our learners. In many cases, this process reaffirms our commitment to current frameworks. In others, it leads us to adopt high-quality alternatives from other educational systems, including Australia, Canada, and China—always with the goal of ensuring relevance, rigor, and meaningful learning outcomes.

Perhaps the most impactful result of each curriculum review is the development of clear and coherent scope and sequence documents. These tools empower teachers with a roadmap that ensures learning is developmentally appropriate, builds on prior knowledge, and prepares students for the next stage in their educational journey.



As we continue this important work, we are proud of the dedication of our educators and the thoughtful decisions that arise from this process. Curriculum review is not just about improving what we teach—it's a reflection of our commitment to excellence, innovation, and the success of every student at our school.



*By Barclay Lelievre, Director of Teaching and Learning at SCIS, Deputy Head of School at SCIS Hongqiao*



In the Primary Years Programme (PYP), learning begins with curiosity and grows through inquiry. Students investigate big ideas, pose thoughtful questions, and take purposeful action—developing the critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills they need to navigate a complex world with confidence. These foundational abilities empower them to take ownership of their education and apply their knowledge in authentic ways.

### The Inquiry Cycle

At the heart of this approach is the inquiry cycle—a dynamic, student-centered process that guides learners from curiosity to deeper understanding:



### Building a Culture of Inquiry

At SCIS, inquiry often begins with a spark—an idea, a question, or a moment of wonder—but quickly evolves into strategic exploration. Framed within six transdisciplinary themes, which serve as conceptual lenses for learning, the PYP encourages students to connect ideas, challenge assumptions, and examine complex issues from multiple perspectives.

This approach extends across the school day and throughout the curriculum. In Grade 2, children explore How the World Works by examining how simple machines solve everyday problems. They draw on knowledge from science, math, and writing as they design and test inventions—refining their ideas along the way and strengthening reasoning, resilience, and perseverance.



In Grade 5, learners take inquiry further through the PYP Exhibition—a culminating experience where they collaborate to explore global issues that matter to them. Whether studying sustainability, access to education, or the impact of technology, they research, propose solutions, and take actions big and small—demonstrating how awareness and insight can lead to change. Along the way, they build Approaches to Learning (ATL) such as communication, self-management, and critical thinking, while growing in empathy, agency, and global awareness.



**The Teacher’s Role**

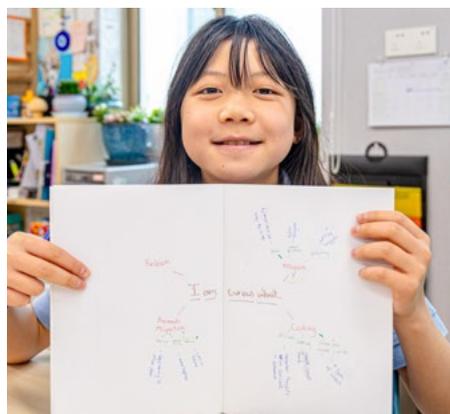
SCIS teachers play a key role in shaping this process. They create supportive environments where students feel confident to take risks, pose questions, and construct understanding. From the beginning of the year, teachers use open-ended prompts and thinking routines to inspire rich dialogue and build a collaborative classroom culture. Provocations such as “What are barriers to building a community?” invite student-led conversations around empathy, identity, and inclusion—resulting in co-created essential agreements and shared responsibility for the learning space.



Throughout the cycle, teachers guide learners—equipping them with strategies to investigate ideas, organize and analyze information, and use their insights to expand their ideas. As students take charge of their thinking and discovery, teachers support them in staying focused, engaged, and intentional. Regular opportunities to reflect help individuals set goals, track progress, and strengthen the stamina and independence needed to thrive in and beyond the classroom.

**How Will Your Child’s Curiosity Shape the World of Tomorrow?**

At SCIS, inquiry is more than a method—it’s a mindset that empowers students to take ownership of learning, develop transferable skills, and apply their understanding across diverse situations. As they examine global issues and generate new ideas, they become caring, responsible thinkers who know that their voices—and their choices—can lead to positive impacts in their lives and communities.



*By Susan Cole, Lower School Vice Principal at SCIS Hongqiao*

# Threads of Change: Weaving Community Gifts into Global Impact



## Explore to Empower

“The world is big and I am small, yet the world is small because I am connected to everyone and everything.” – Unknown.

What does ‘community’ really mean? We belong to many different communities—whether through family, nationality, culture, peers, shared interests, or values. When thinking about how to engage with these communities, it requires an



asset-based approach, one that highlights the strengths already present. These gifts can be found not only in individuals but also in places, institutions, and stories. By recognizing these assets, we can have a constructive dialogue and better understand the challenges our communities face, and approach them with humility and openness. “How can we address Challenge X together while using all the gifts available to us? This journey of discovery, happens both in the classroom, and out. Stay tuned for how we plan to continue mapping our community as a way to expand our strategic partnerships. After all, our mission is to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring learners who contribute positively to their communities.

## Scan the QR Code to Watch the Video of What is Your Gift?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G6AoVkrQaz4>



## Connect and Contribute

Contribute. Take a moment to list the words that come to mind when you think of this concept. Now expand on this list using all the languages you know. It becomes clear that there isn't just one way to take action and contribute. This applies to all learners—students of every age, teachers across divisions, parents, and other community members. At its heart, it's about co-creating a shared purpose and fostering authentic, equitable relationships while exploring multiple pathways for action.

Frameworks can help contextualize and model a shared understanding of both the broader approach to community engagement and the specific purpose of each initiative. To name a few, our collaboration with Historic Shanghai - for both the fall (and upcoming spring walk!) highlights the importance of connecting with the rich stories and histories of the place SCIS calls home.

Roots & Wings is an initiative that offers multiple pathways for action, exploring the balance between grounding traditions (roots) and expanding opportunities for

growth (wings). In the classroom, it comes to life through hands-on experiences, such as an arts therapist guiding Grade 4 students to connect the SDGs to their Arts Advocacy unit. For Grade 10, it sparks conversations in the Plaza as students explore data visualizations around well-being. In Advisory, it's integrated through a student-led rollout, enhancing our already strong focus on well-being. Community-based experiences have become a way to pilot strategic partnerships, co-creating meaningful experiences, and deeply consider what it means to collaborate, nurture curiosity,



and build reciprocal relationships. Whether it's a family workout at Aboro Gym, connecting with nature with Ivy at Yili Park, or a culinary experience with Chef Mike, these initiatives are essential in building community and fostering open dialogue.

Green Walks is a local competition that invites students to engage with sustainability through speeches and videos rooted in real-world observation. Research shows that firsthand experiences in nature—like journaling or mindful walking—help combat apathy and deepen connection. But how can we bridge this with classroom learning to spark even greater meaning? In Mandarin, students searched for Chinese characters in

their environment, making connections between language and landscape. Physics students explored the origin and efficiency of energy through the "Beauty and Truth" thinking routine. Spanish students designed their own "Shanghai Scents," considering seasonality, locality, and sustainability while practicing figurative language. Even our Grade 4 students had a strong foundation through prior inquiry into similar themes.

The National Honor Society continues to be a powerful avenue for developing student agency, compassion, and engagement. This growing group of Upper School students has led a range of meaningful experiences—both short- and long-term—driven by curiosity and a desire to make a difference. What

began as a visit from a former Dragon evolved into an ongoing story exchange with a school in Togo, Africa, broadening global perspectives. Students have also explored inclusion and diverse abilities through initiatives like a team-building event at Dream Coffee Workshop and sign language activities in the community. AI workshops, approached through an ethical lens, have sparked thoughtful conversations around humanity and innovation. We're proud to support these students as they lead from within—alongside peers, parents, teachers, and the broader community.

Participation. Co-design. These are building blocks for cultivating a culture of engagement.

### Rethink and Refine

Pause to process. Look back to look forward. 前事不忘，后事之师。 However you describe it, these crucial steps of reflection and evaluation encourage participants to deeply consider their learning and experiences. Unlike traditional models, this happens throughout the ongoing process and is focused on minimizing potential harm. Key questions that might arise include: How are my views on the challenge evolving? How might my actions be perceived by those I

aim to impact, and do they align with my original intent?

As we know, action is never fully "finished." While solutions have been implemented, the ongoing work is about building on that progress. It requires perseverance, consistency, and the ability to adapt to new challenges while driving lasting change. The key is maintaining momentum and reflecting on how each step forward opens new avenues for contribution and growth.



### Engaging the World, One Community at a Time

We start and end with the world. The IB ethos aims to "empower young people with the values, knowledge, and skills... to make sense of complexities and take responsible action... to create a better and more peaceful world." Our communities shape our worlds, and while the idea of proximity has evolved, it still guides how we engage with one another.

For our early learners, this means developing empathy, exploring fairness, and beginning to reflect on how their actions impact those around them—whether in the classroom, at home, or in their immediate surroundings.

As adolescents naturally lean toward risk-taking, they can benefit from healthy opportunities to take positive risks—such

as advocating for causes or standing up for others. These experiences, often motivated by peers, foster both personal growth and collective action, helping them navigate complex challenges with confidence.

So let's continue taking steps. Community-engaged learning invites us to discover what ignites our curiosity and develop essential skills. It strengthens connections—building relationships and broadening our perspectives. And it nurtures thriving—promoting resilience, growth, and a sense of well-being.



**By J. Haakon Gould, Grades 1 - 12 Service Learning Coach & DP CAS Coordinator, Head of Individuals & Societies Department, DP Global Politics Teacher at SCIS Hongqiao**



## Language Through Landmarks: SCIS Students Map French-Inspired Architecture in Shanghai

Learning a new language goes beyond mere communication; it enriches our understanding of diverse cultures and perspectives. French is a prime example of this in Shanghai, a city where the influence of French culture can still be seen in its architecture, cuisine, and lifestyle. By studying French, learners not only acquire the ability to converse in another tongue but also gain insights into the values, traditions, and history of the Francophone world. This deeper cultural appreciation fosters connections between people and enhances cross-cultural exchanges, making the experience of learning French both valuable and transformative in a multicultural environment like Shanghai.

In the third unit of the French Phase 3-4 class, students have researched and examined examples of French-inspired architecture in Shanghai, and they will now lead an engaging activity during the historic Shanghai tour in May 2025. The French language class, along with other subjects, will be part of the tour to highlight the rich French-inspired heritage that has contributed to the city's architectural landscape.

Students have explored vocabulary related to natural and urban landscapes in the unit. Following a reading assessment focused on natural environments, they began a research project on urban elements inspired by French culture. Each student researched three distinctive landmarks, ranging from those in the Xuhui District to the Bund. As part of their oral assessment, they were required to present their findings in class with visual aids.

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*Throughout this project, I enjoyed exploring various aspects of Shanghai, including the construction of its buildings and the diverse architectural styles. This research increased my understanding of Shanghai's rich cultural and architectural heritage and its blend of influences from different Western cultures.*  
- Rebecca (Grade 10)

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A select group of students will compile the presentations into QR codes, incorporating both French and English, so that they can be shared with the entire SCIS community. Additionally, this group will provide insights to determine several locations along the route for the walk based on their research findings.

Through guided presentations, students will highlight significant landmarks, discussing their historical context, architectural styles, and cultural significance. This initiative will not only deepen students' appreciation for global heritage but also foster international-mindedness by encouraging dialogue and collaboration among diverse participants.

By promoting multilingualism, students will practice language skills and communicate their insights in both French and English, enhancing their intercultural understanding. Ultimately, this experience will empower students to connect with their surroundings and appreciate the intricate tapestry of cultures that coexist in Shanghai, paving the way for a more inclusive and globally aware perspective.



*By Guillaume Moncuit,  
MYP & DP French &  
Individuals and Societies  
Teacher at SCIS Hongqiao*




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*I am excited about the Shanghai Walk project that we are planning, especially because it incorporates my native language. I am even more excited because I have personally researched and educated myself on this topic. I am so grateful that the school incorporates this amazing city and its history into a learning experience to teach so many different things.*  
- Millie (Grade 8)

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*One Voice to Unite Them All:*

# The Language of Community

Let me tell you a story about a small, but very special group of students. It was August 2024, and SCIS Pudong was buzzing with the normal excitement and the slight grief of the first day of school. The hallways were awash with voices, ecstatically embracing their friends after a summer away, and reluctantly sauntering into the new school year.

Enter my English language acquisition classroom, Room 303, and you were greeted with a palpable silence. Emergent language learners, Korean, Japanese, Brazilian, and Chinese, sat quietly at their desks, hesitant and unsure. Eyes darting around the room, grasping for meaning in anything they could see. On this day, language felt

more like a barrier than a bridge, and friendships seemed a distant possibility.

Fast forward to today, and the scene has changed dramatically. The classroom buzzes with energy, filled with laughter and lively discussions. Students gather in small groups, sharing jokes and ideas. The teacher (me) who used to actively encourage student participation, now has to settle down the room with her “teacher” voice before the day’s lesson (which I am thrilled to do).

Today in Room 303, conversations flow easily as students collaborate, learning from one another and building connections. Friendship has transformed from a challenge into a pathway for

connection and communication across languages, uniting these young learners in a multilingual community.

So, how did it happen? What caused this dramatic shift? Let’s hear from them!

## **What were your first days at SCIS like?**

**Bruno:** It was very hard. When someone in my class asked me something, I would say, “I don’t understand.” But when my teacher asked something, I would say, “OK!”

**Logan:** My teacher asked me, “Where are you from?” and I said, “Yes!”





and communicate the ideas in our own language, and then we can work together to think about it in English.

### **What is the importance of friendship in learning a language?**

**Bruno:** If you make a friend, just hearing them speak English is helpful. You can ask them what things mean.

**Laura:** It is important to speak to many people from other countries.

**Minsol:** Making friends is important so that you can communicate using English.

**Mao:** And don't be shy!



### **How have things changed?**

**Laura:** I understand more English now, and I am more comfortable.

### **What is special about our class?**

#### **Why is it easy to talk to your friends in this class?**

**Laura:** This class helps me build my vocabulary.

**Takami:** Someone speaks Japanese, Korean—every language. There is a shared language for everyone.

**Logan:** We can ask questions easily. And everyone has questions, so it is easy to ask.

#### **Can you think of how your friendship in this class has helped you improve your English?**

**Minsol:** We use all different languages here, but we have to speak English to each other. It really helps me.

**Logan:** We use body language to communicate, and I have to use my English to help my friends.

#### **How do your friends influence your motivation to practice English?**

**Bruno:** When I first started at SCIS, I made friends with a boy who spoke Portuguese like me. But when he was speaking with his other friends, I was flabbergasted (his words!)—his English was so good! That really motivated me to keep learning.

**Max:** It's really good, I have friends that can speak English and Chinese. When I am confused with something, I can ask them in Chinese and they can respond in both Chinese and English.

#### **How have our language buddies helped you in English?**

**Minsol:** We can ask questions in Korean

The evolution of Room 303 exemplifies the role that community and friendship have in language acquisition. The bonds formed among these diverse students not only provide emotional support but also encourage them to engage more actively with different languages. As they share their experiences and learn from one another, their comfort grows, making it easier to take risks and embrace mistakes, an important part of every language learning journey. With friends by their side, these emergent language learners find joy in communication, fostering a multilingual environment where confidence flourishes and language barriers fade away. And it sure makes them a great group to teach!



*By Jessie Doster, MYP & DP  
English Language Acquisition  
Teacher at SCIS Pudong*



# Building Resilient Problem Solvers: The Role of School Counselors

In today's challenging educational landscape, the role of SCIS school counselors has evolved into that of proactive supporters for students and families. They guide students from early childhood through Grade 12, helping them become effective problem solvers who lead with compassion. SCIS counselors employ a variety of strategies, including class lessons, advisory time, small group interventions, individual counseling, and restorative conversations, all aimed at fostering a nurturing environment for students.

In Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Lower School, counselors conduct social-emotional screeners three times a year. These assessments are invaluable for identifying the unique needs of each grade level, enabling counselors to effectively target small groups. A key focus area is the Zones of Regulation, a framework that teaches students to manage their emotions and behaviors by categorizing feelings into four zones: red, yellow, green, and blue. Each zone represents different emotional states, empowering students to recognize their feelings and respond appropriately, thereby enhancing their emotional intelligence.

Counselors also facilitate friendship groups and problem-solving skills sessions. These small group interventions are designed to help students navigate social challenges and build meaningful relationships. Additionally, counselors work individually with students facing difficulties identified by teachers, providing tailored support through targeted sessions. This individualized approach ensures that each student receives the attention they need to flourish.

Collaboration between counselors and teachers is vital, particularly when addressing critical issues such as bullying and child safeguarding. Together, they conduct lessons that equip students with the knowledge and skills to recognize and address these concerns, fostering a safe and inclusive school culture. This teamwork not only enhances student well-being but also creates a supportive community where everyone can thrive.

As students transition to Upper School, the counseling approach shifts to incorporate self-reflection and personal check-ins. Students complete weekly or bi-weekly check-in forms, allowing them to express any concerns they might have. This proactive





measure enables counselors to reach out to individuals needing additional support, ensuring that no student feels overlooked during this critical developmental stage.

Upper School counselors prioritize building relationships by meeting with all students. These connections are essential for fostering trust and open communication, which are key components of effective counseling. Counselors work closely with Grade-Level Leaders to develop appropriate lessons for a robust advisory program. Their focus on using Circles during advisory times ensures that all students can engage, fostering a sense of belonging and trust. This practice creates a safe space for open communication where students can practice active listening and empathy, promoting inclusivity and shared decision-making.

Advisory lessons cover relevant topics such as emotional regulation skills, bullying prevention, body image, nutrition, and health. SCIS counselors also play a crucial role in welcoming new students and families, ensuring a smooth transition into the community through various programs designed to support them.

Additionally, our counselors provide vital support in guiding students and their families through the college preparation process. This assistance begins early and continues through the final years of high school, ensuring that students are academically and emotionally equipped to make informed decisions about their futures. Counselors hold one-on-one meetings to discuss college interests, application processes, and



scholarship opportunities, conducting workshops on essential topics like college essay writing and interview preparation.

Through this comprehensive approach, counselors empower students to pursue their educational goals with confidence, inspiring them to dream big and lay the groundwork for a successful future.

Ultimately, SCIS counselors address immediate issues while cultivating a community of resilient students capable of thriving socially and emotionally. By equipping them with problem-solving skills and fostering a compassionate approach to challenges, counselors play a pivotal role in shaping the leaders of tomorrow. Their proactive efforts across all grade levels create an environment where students feel supported, understood, and empowered to navigate life's challenges with confidence and empathy. As they develop these essential skills, students become better prepared to contribute positively to their communities, embodying the values of compassion and resilience that are at the heart of their education.



*By Kristi Dahlstrom,  
Director of Student  
Support Services at SCIS*



# The Essential Role of College Counseling in Empowering Future Changemakers

The role of the college counselor is to equip students with the skills and attributes needed to not only thrive in college but also pursue a future that aligns with their passions and goals. Counselors support students' well-being in the application process by guiding them through deadlines, managing academic expectations, teaching effective research skills, and helping them as they navigate each unique admissions journey.

This journey begins with empowering students to take ownership of their high school experience and develop a manageable plan to achieve their goals. As early as middle school, students start making choices that deepen their interests, cultivate leadership skills, strengthen their self-management skills, and recognize what they inherently value.

In the early High School years, counselors help students explore career opportunities by first identifying their academic interests and then connecting them to real-world applications. Whether drawn to STEM, the humanities, business, or the arts, students receive valuable insights into university programs and career pathways, ensuring they make informed decisions. Beyond the classroom, counselors encourage students to become active members of their community by participating in MUN, being a leader in the Student Council, tutoring younger students, participating on a sports team, or even showing leadership skills in the classroom. All experiences, no matter how





big or small, help students cultivate key qualities both universities and future employers are looking for: intellectual curiosity, service to others, initiative, and collaboration.

In Grades 11 and 12, counseling lessons go beyond leadership development to focus on personal growth. Topics such as self-reflection, goal setting, resilience, and developing a growth mindset are emphasized to help students gain confidence in their decision-making. Every student is on their own unique journey, both academic and personal. When students learn from their mistakes and overcome challenges, they gain independence, which helps them build the self-reliance and confidence needed to thrive as adults navigating their paths forward.

The college admissions process can feel overwhelming for both students and parents. Emphasizing the importance of mental well-being combined with breaking the application process into manageable steps encourages balance and hopefully reduces unnecessary stress, making the journey more rewarding. Since college admissions is a family endeavor, counselors also champion the importance of collaboration between students and parents. Yes, college counselors support students in finding the right college fit—not just based on rankings but by considering academic programs, campus culture, and opportunities that align with their personal goals.

Ultimately, the guidance provided by college counselors lays the foundation for lifelong success. Whether pursuing

higher education, entering the workforce, or exploring entrepreneurial ventures, the lessons learned through this journey prepare students to embrace opportunities, overcome obstacles, and achieve their goals. College counselors are not just advisors; they are mentors who help shape the leaders, innovators, and changemakers of tomorrow. Their impact resonates far beyond high school, influencing students' lives and the communities they will one day serve.



**By Lynn Brown,  
Upper School Counselor  
at SCIS Hongqiao**

# Chinese Cuisine: A Delicious Reflection of Cultural Identity and Hospitality

Chinese cuisine is more than just food; it is a vibrant expression of cultural identity and a symbol of hospitality. In our Mandarin classes, from MYP Phase 1 to Phase 5, we explore how Chinese cuisine reflects these cultural values and how it serves as a bridge to understanding Chinese society.

## The Cultural Significance of Chinese Cuisine

Chinese cuisine is deeply intertwined with the country's cultural identity. The concept of "yin" and "yang", for example, is reflected in the balance of flavors, textures, and ingredients in every dish. Hot and cold, spicy and mild, crunchy and soft—these contrasts are not just about taste but also about harmony, a core value in Chinese philosophy.

Hospitality is another key aspect of Chinese culture, and food plays a central role in expressing it. In China, sharing a meal is a way to build relationships and show respect. Whether it's a family gathering or a formal banquet, the host always ensures an abundance of dishes to make guests feel welcome. This tradition of generosity is something we emphasize in our Mandarin classes, teaching students how food fosters connection and community.

## Teaching Chinese Cuisine and Culture in MYP Mandarin Classes

From MYP Phase 1 to Phase 5, our Mandarin curriculum integrates Chinese cuisine as a gateway to understanding culture, language, and traditions.





### Phase 1: Introduction to Chinese Food

In Phase 1, students are introduced to basic vocabulary related to food, such as common dishes made with pork and beef. They learn to identify characters and dishes from menus at Chinese restaurants. Through fun activities like matching pictures of food with characters, students learn to say the names of common dishes in Mandarin and understand the cultural significance of dishes like “jiǎo zi” (dumplings) and “chǎo miàn” (fried noodles).

### Phase 2: Regional Diversity

In Phase 2, students practice ordering food in Mandarin, using phrases to describe flavors such as suān (sour), tián (sweet), là (spicy), and xián (salty). They also compare Chinese and Western food, examining differences in ingredients and cooking techniques to foster a deeper understanding of cross-cultural culinary practices.

### Phase 3: Festivals and Food

In Phase 3, students delve into the role of food in Chinese festivals. They learn about the symbolism behind dishes like “nián gāo” (sticky rice cake) during the Chinese New Year and “zòng zi” (sticky rice dumplings) during the Dragon Boat Festival. Cooking demonstrations and cultural workshops bring these traditions to life, helping students appreciate the deeper meanings behind the food.

### Phase 4: Cooking and Language

Phase 4 combines language learning with hands-on cooking experiences. Students follow recipes in Mandarin, learning key verbs and measurements while preparing dishes like “kung pao chicken” or “spring rolls”. This practical approach not only improves their language skills but also deepens their understanding of Chinese culinary techniques.

### Phase 5: Food and Identity

In Phase 5, students analyze how Chinese cuisine reflects cultural identity. They learn about the “Eight Great Cuisines” of China and, through projects and presentations, discover how geography, climate, and resources shape each region’s culinary traditions. Students also explore dining etiquette in Chinese culture to deepen their understanding of the connection between food and identity.

Chinese cuisine is a window into China’s cultural identity and values of hospitality. Through our Mandarin classes, students not only learn about the language but also gain a deeper appreciation for the traditions and stories behind the food. As they progress from Phase 1 to Phase 5, they discover how food connects people, preserves heritage, and celebrates diversity. By exploring Chinese cuisine, we are not just teaching students how to cook or order food; we are helping them understand the heart and soul of Chinese culture.



*By Helen He, MYP and DP Mandarin Teacher, Head of Language Acquisition at SCIS Hongqiao*

## Igniting Creativity:

# The Lower School Flame Newspaper!



Every story begins with a spark, and at SCIS, we believe every student has a story worth telling. With the release of the first edition of The Lower School Flame of SCIS Pudong, our student-created newspaper, we're excited to open a new chapter in student expression. This initiative offers students a meaningful platform to share their voices.

Through the After-School Activity (ASA) "Publications," students in Grades 2-5 at SCIS Pudong Lower School have come together to explore the art of storytelling, photography, and publishing. This highlights their creativity, collaboration, and dedication—showcasing their unique perspectives and talents for the entire SCIS community to enjoy.

### The Birth of Lower School Publications: A Journey of Creativity and Collaboration

Lower School Publications took root last year when Lower School students collaborated with Upper School peers on the Yearbook. Inspired by this partnership, they also contributed to The Flame,

the Upper School's newspaper, before launching their own publication this year. The inaugural team, consisting of 10 students and 1 editor, was selected through applications and interviews. They meet weekly to collaborate on a variety of creative projects, from yearbooks and newspapers to presentations and flyers.

### Behind the Scenes of The Lower School Flame

After months of planning, writing, and teamwork, our students are thrilled to unveil the first edition of The Lower School Flame. They captured vibrant moments of school life, combining their storytelling and photography skills to bring the publication to life. They worked together to write articles, select images, create comics, and finalize the layout—each step offering a valuable hands-on learning experience.

Angela, our Student Editor, played an instrumental role in reviewing articles and ensuring the publication's overall quality. We also extend our gratitude to Hyewon, a Grade 12 student and Upper School

Yearbook Liaison. Her expert guidance in photography and publishing has been invaluable, and her collaboration with the Lower School team has helped foster connections between our younger and older students.

### Student Voices: A Look Inside The Lower School Flame

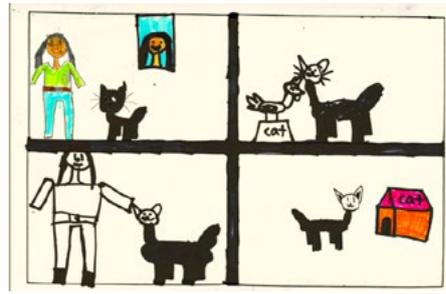
The Publication Staff is excited to share their experiences. Below, they reflect on how they came up with their article ideas, the challenges they faced, and the teamwork involved in bringing it all together. They also share what they are most proud of.

**Angela (Grade 5):** "I have two pet dogs, so I wanted to write about how great pets are. It was a lot of work, but I'm happy with my article. Editing was especially hard, and I had to read every single part carefully to make sure I didn't miss any mistakes."

**Aram (Grade 3):** "We worked together as a team, and I wanted to share what we do—like our agreements and what we're working on. The toughest part was making my article make sense, but I'm really pleased with how it turned out."

**Gia (Grade 4):** "We decided to write about an upcoming event, which gave us a lot to cover. The first paragraph was tricky because we hadn't written it down, but I'm happy to share my piece with everyone."

**Yu Vern (Grade 4):** "I wanted to share what we're doing as a team and how we're working together. It was hard to think of an idea at first, but I'm glad to be part of the newspaper."



**Shaked (Grade 5):** "I like pets, and I wanted to write about how people need to respect pets like humans. It took a lot of time, but I'm happy with how my article turned out. The design of the newspaper also looks amazing."

**Isabella (Grade 3):** "I thought it would be nice to write about games people can play at recess, so they could get ideas. Finding the right games was a bit tricky, but I'm proud of the result."

**Lea (Grade 2):** "I like recess, so I decided to write about it. It was hard to figure out the words, but I'm happy with how it turned out."

**Kylie (Grade 2):** "I decided to write about recess because it's something I know well. The hardest part was typing everything, but I'm proud that I finished it."

**Olivia (Grade 2):** "At first, I was going to work with Lea and Kylie, but then I decided to write my own article. Typing it out was hard because I had to think a lot, but I'm proud of it now."

**Alexander (Grade 5):** "I found a template for my comic. It was hard to find one that fit my idea, but I'm excited that our newspaper is being published!"

**Luc (Grade 2):** "I like cats, so I drew a comic for Dr. Myers, and I'm really happy with how it turned out."



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the Full Version of This Issue

### Teacher Insights: Reflections from Miss Meidinger

Malika Meidinger, the Lower School Teacher Advisor & Editor, and PYP Coordinator at SCIS Pudong, has observed remarkable growth in the students' executive functioning skills.

"It's been amazing to see the skills that they are learning in class are being applied in this context. I loved overhearing students talk about the research they were doing in class for writing and how they needed to structure their newspaper articles with an opening and closing. They broke down large tasks into manageable parts, stuck to deadlines, and collaborated effectively."

During a topic selection meeting, a student said, 'I don't really want to do that topic, but this is Lower School Publications. We have to collaborate. We can work together!' It's evident that the students demonstrate a growth mindset and are able to understand their peers' perspectives to work together to reach a shared goal."

Ms. Meidinger also shared a special moment of collaboration: "Mr. Matthews, our Lower School Music Teacher, has been working hard behind the scenes for the Music Concert. He wanted students to create the flyer for the concert, and after being impressed by their Canva skills, he decided to learn how to use it himself. He joined our meeting and worked with students to co-create the presentation."

As the students continue to hone their writing, photography, and editing skills, we are confident that their future publications will showcase even greater creativity and teamwork. With each edition, they will continue to grow as storytellers and as individuals, sharing their unique perspectives with the SCIS community.



# The Personal Project: Bridging Academics and Passion



For many years, my family has posed an intriguing question, "Who was the Black Prince?" We have always been curious to know if he is part of our ancestry. I would love to delve into my family's past, trace their stories and discover if the connection to the Black Prince really is true. This is how I introduce the Personal Project to grade 10 students. What is something that excites them? What is something they have always wanted to find out more about?

The Personal Project contributes to the completion of the Middle Years Programme (MYP), offering students an opportunity to engage in a self-directed exploration of their interests and passions. This fosters creativity and serves as a link between academic development and personal growth, focusing on the whole student—intellectually, emotionally, and socially; highlighting a holistic approach to education.

One of the most notable elements of the Personal Project is its interdisciplinary nature. Rather than being confined to a single subject, students are encouraged to draw on knowledge and skills from various academic disciplines. For her project, Rebecca combined scientific knowledge about food nutrition and technical production skills from the arts to create an informative website for those with food allergies. This interdisciplinary approach enriched her understanding and provided a deeper appreciation of her academic studies beyond the classroom, with connections to real-life contexts.



Combining the Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills is a key aspect of the Personal Project; students become more effective, independent, and self-regulated learners. Thinking skills are key as students think critically about their chosen topic whilst using their creative thinking skills to solve problems and produce a final piece. Communication skills are vital as students must articulate their goals clearly. Research plays a particularly crucial role as students learn to gather, evaluate, and apply information effectively. Whether students are researching background information, looking for supporting data, or learning how to access and assess reliable sources, these skills are integral to ensuring the quality and depth of their project. It also equips them with the tools to navigate the vast array of information available in our digital world. Filippo recognised the importance of research as he said; "I've enjoyed being my own teacher and learning more about nutrition. The research process has helped me set my own deadlines and has enhanced how I express my own ideas."

The Personal Project comprehensively integrates ATL skills, interdisciplinary explorations, and reflective practices. With an emphasis on student agency, learners take ownership of their educational journey. Students are empowered to pursue what they truly care about and develop practical and interpersonal skills to be successful in the next stage of their academic journey. Rebecca reflected on the overall process saying; "I have learnt how to manage my time and most of all I have created something that can have an impact on the community", highlighting how our students become lifelong learners and responsible global citizens with a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the world.



*By Siobhan Ashburn, MYP Media/DP Film Teacher, Personal Project Coordinator at SCIS Hongqiao*



# *The Power of Play:* Nurturing Creativity & Critical Thinking

At the SCIS Early Childhood Campus, play-based learning is embraced as the foundation of our educational approach. Play is not just about fun—it is a powerful vehicle for learning, nurturing children's creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. When children engage in purposeful play, they explore ideas, develop essential social skills, and build the confidence they need for lifelong learning.

Young children learn best through active engagement with their environment. Play-based learning allows children to make sense of the world around them by experimenting, questioning, and discovering through hands-on experiences. Whether they are building structures with blocks, role-playing in a pretend kitchen, or investigating nature, play encourages children to think deeply, test hypotheses, and collaborate with others.

Teachers are keen observers of children and thoughtfully design learning experiences that balance structured and open-ended play based on student interests. This approach ensures that children not only develop foundational





academic skills but also cultivate curiosity, resilience, and independence. By embedding literacy, numeracy, and inquiry into play, learning is meaningful and relevant to each child.

Creativity flourishes in an environment that encourages imagination and exploration. When children engage in dramatic play, art, music, and storytelling, they learn to express themselves in unique ways. A child transforming a cardboard box into a bus or airplane, painting an abstract masterpiece, or inventing a new game is demonstrating creativity and critical thinking skills. These experiences help children build flexibility in thinking, an essential skill in an ever-changing world. Critical thinking is cultivated when children are encouraged to analyze, evaluate, and make decisions. In play-based learning, children encounter challenges that require them to think critically. For example, when building a tower, they experiment with balance and stability, adjusting their approach based on outcomes. When navigating a social conflict in a game, they practice negotiation and perspective-taking.

Teachers facilitate these experiences by prompting children with open-ended questions such as, "What do you think will happen if...?" or "How can we solve this problem together?" These interactions encourage deeper thinking, reflection, and reasoning—skills that lay the groundwork for future academic and personal success.

As a school community, we are committed to fostering a learning environment where play is valued as a necessary and valuable component of development. Families are encouraged to support this approach at home by providing opportunities for unstructured play with open-ended materials that encourage curiosity and creativity, and engaging in meaningful conversations about their child's creations and discoveries.



*By Heather Knight,  
Principal at SCIS  
Hongqiao ECE*

# The Power of Students in Promoting International Mindedness

In today's interconnected world, understanding and embracing international-mindedness is more crucial than ever. International-mindedness fosters a view of the world where individuals see themselves as part of a global community, taking responsibility for its members. This concept is not merely an abstract ideal; it forms the foundation of our educational approach at Pudong Lower School. By cultivating a culture of international-mindedness, we prepare our students to be empathetic, principled, and open-minded individuals who can effect positive change.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) emphasizes that the journey towards international-mindedness is complex and ongoing, rather than a destination to be reached. A 2017 IB-commissioned

research project highlighted two essential components of this journey: "reaching out" to engage with others and "reaching in" to understand ourselves in relation to the diverse perspectives around us. At Pudong Lower School, we promote this journey by integrating these concepts into our curriculum and school culture.

Students play a pivotal role in fostering international-mindedness. Their actions and attitudes can significantly influence the learning environment and the broader community. Developing a positive mindset begins with the attributes outlined in the IB learner profile, such as being open-minded, principled, and caring. These attributes empower students to embrace differences, exhibit tolerance, and practice empathy. For instance, when students are encouraged to listen to diverse perspectives and reflect on their own feelings toward others, they begin to cultivate a deeper understanding of the world around them.

Open-mindedness is particularly vital for intercultural understanding. It enables students to recognize their own biases and appreciate the richness that diversity brings. By fostering an environment where students can express curiosity and seek out opinions from different peer groups, we help them build meaningful relationships and resolve conflicts through





dialogue. Simple actions—such as including classmates in games or engaging with students from different backgrounds—illustrate how international-mindedness can be practiced daily.

Moreover, principled actions reinforce these values. At our school, students are encouraged to help newcomers feel welcome, support peers struggling with language acquisition, and stand up against bullying. These actions not only demonstrate care and respect but also build a sense of community where everyone belongs. By sharing their cultural traditions and experiences, students contribute to a richer classroom dialogue, enhancing our collective understanding and appreciation of global perspectives.

At Pudong Lower School, we prioritize the development of interpersonal skills

through our social-emotional learning curriculum. By integrating positive discipline, we actively teach children how to communicate their emotions and collaborate effectively. This approach ensures that diverse perspectives are not only heard but valued. As an inclusive school, we are fortunate to welcome a variety of languages, nationalities, and learning styles, creating a safe and nurturing environment for all.

Our commitment to fostering international-mindedness aligns with the mission of the Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) to develop caring learners who contribute positively to their communities. By emphasizing the attributes of the IB learner profile and equipping students with essential skills, we are preparing them to navigate a complex world with confidence and compassion.

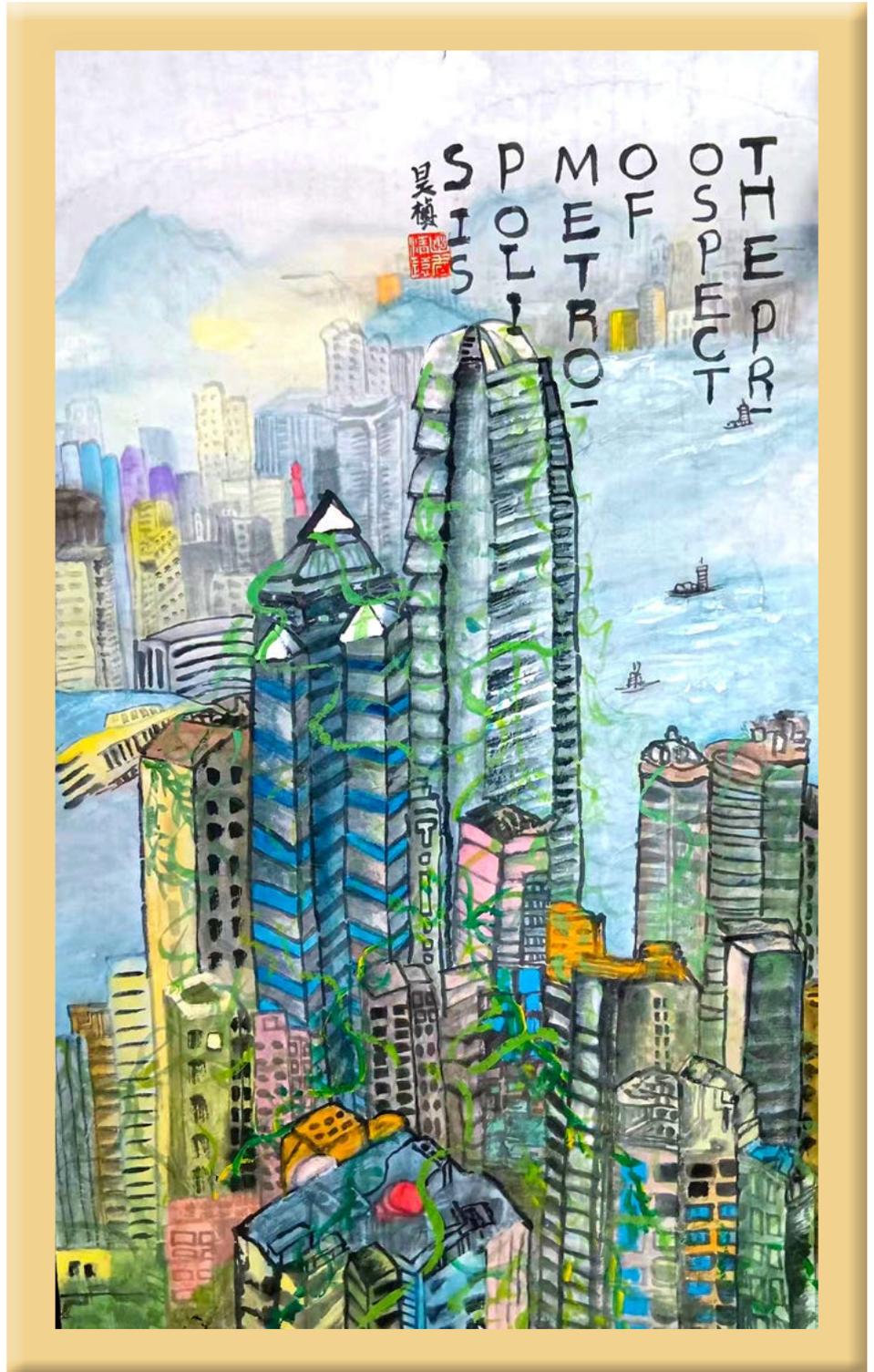
In conclusion, the role of students in promoting international-mindedness is fundamental. By nurturing open-minded, principled, and caring individuals, we empower them to take action for positive change. This journey of understanding, learning, and reflecting is vital for fostering a more inclusive and connected global community, where every student can thrive and contribute meaningfully.



*By Molly Myers, Lower School Principal at SCIS Pudong*

## Sky, Grade 11, SCIS Hongqiao

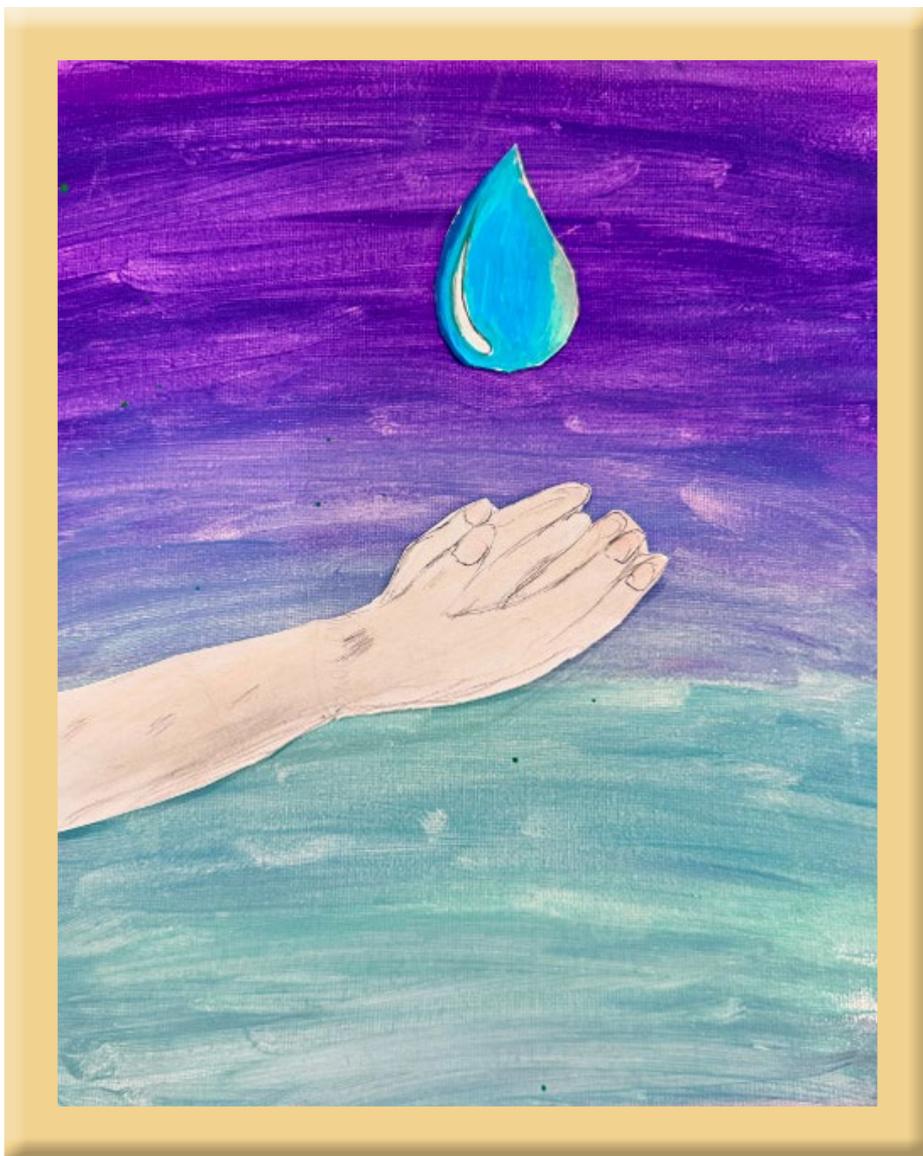
First-Prize Winner of Age Group 11-18, 2024 Art & Writing Competition hosted by Shanghai Family, Parents&Kids, Humaniuwa



### The Prospect of Metropolis

This artwork envisions the future of megacities after years of sustainable development. Green vines climb freely up skyscrapers, symbolizing efforts to transform cities into thriving ecosystems. Elements like oceans, mountains, and ships reflect humanity's coexistence with nature and commitment to a cleaner environment.

Inspired by the skylines of Shanghai and Hong Kong, I was amazed by their green architecture and urban planning. Using traditional Chinese painting techniques, I merged nature with modern cityscapes to create a unique harmony. Through countless refinements, The Prospect of Metropolis came to life, encouraging reflection on sustainable urban living.



**Leo, Grade 4,  
SCIS Hongqiao**

**Water**

Created with paint, markers, and sketching, my artwork shows how every drop means life for some people. I hope everyone will try to save water by protecting precious lives.

**Novia, Grade 4, SCIS Hongqiao**

**The Sad Whale**

Exploring Global Goal 14: Life Below Water. I painted two whales, and one of them was lifted by the ship. It makes us think carefully about how we share the ocean with marine life.



# Nurturing Young Artists:

## How the IB PYP Fosters Creative Expression

The International Baccalaureate recognizes that engaging with the arts fosters creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking, allowing students to explore their ideas and express their feelings.

In the vibrant halls of our IB PYP school in Shanghai, one student stands out for his remarkable artistic talent and unique approach to creation—Jaiden. As a Grade 5 student at SCIS Pudong, Jaiden has embraced his artistic journey with passion and dedication, demonstrating a natural intuition for mixed media that is both impressive and inspiring. His artwork not only reflects his individual voice but also serves as a testament to the transformative power of the arts in education.

In this interview, Jaiden shares insights into his creative process, the materials he loves to work with, and how he has cultivated his artistic identity. As we delve into Jaiden's world, we celebrate not just his achievements, but the importance of nurturing young artists within our community.

### A Conversation with Jaiden

In a recent discussion, I had the pleasure of speaking with Grade 5 student Jaiden about his artistic journey and the inspiration behind his creations. Here's a glimpse into our conversation, showcasing Jaiden's thoughtful approach to art making.

**Mr. Stephen:** Hello Jaiden, can you tell me a little bit about this piece you created with magic markers? What were you thinking about?



Marker, oil pastel, and acrylic paint on paper

Recycled markers and hot glue on paper



**Jaiden:** I wanted to express how everybody's connected, like bridges connecting each other's thoughts and opinions. The colors matter too because everyone's thoughts are different colors, representing different meanings and themes in my artwork.

**Mr. Stephen:** That's very thoughtful. Now, looking at this other artwork, this artwork stands out because you used only acrylic paint. How does it differ from your mixed-media pieces?

**Jaiden:** It shows how I can experiment with colors. Even without mixed media, I layered paints to create unique patterns and effects.

**Mr. Stephen:** Excellent. I also noticed this is the only one with a title. You chose to call it "The Meaningless Letters." How did you come up with that title?

**Jaiden:** At first, I used strong colors like dark red, pink, orange, and black. I had to balance these colors, which took a long time. When I say "wordless," I mean there are words everywhere, but I placed them very specifically in my artwork.



**The Meaningless Letters**  
Fabric and paper cutouts on cardboard



Mixed mediums and hot glue on recycled book cover

**Mr. Stephen:** It's fascinating how you combine materials. Let's discuss this mixed-media piece now. What was your process, and how did you decide which materials to combine?

**Jaiden:** During our After School Activities (ASA) sessions, I was thinking about creating 3D images. I used magazines and cardboard to build shapes, making the artwork pop out realistically.

**Mr. Stephen:** It's fascinating how you combine materials. Let's talk about these two pieces together because they seem related. What connects them?

**Jaiden:** They are similar because I mainly used flat materials. I cut out different shapes and placed them thoughtfully, exploring negative and positive spaces. I also used spirals to add movement. You taught us to go slow, and when I used this piece of paper, I made the same hole in various places, which created interesting angles. For the other piece, I used lots of strips to create a cloth-like effect, almost like sewing different pieces of paper together.

**Mr. Stephen:** So you're weaving the different layers together?

**Jaiden:** Yes.

**Mr. Stephen:** Thank you for sharing. If you had to choose one or two IB learner

profiles that connect with your art-making practice, which would they be?

**Jaiden:** I'd say "Inquirers" because I think about how to use different materials, and "Creative" because I communicate with you and others to improve my artwork.

### **A Young Artist's Journey**

As Jaiden continues to explore his artistic journey, he exemplifies the qualities of an emerging artist who is confidently finding his voice. Through his thoughtful use of materials and colors, he demonstrates a deep understanding of his artistic intentions, employing appropriate vocabulary and concepts from the PYP Art Scope and Sequence. Jaiden actively engages in dialogue with both peers and adults, seeking feedback that fosters his growth as an artist. His willingness to reflect on his work and take creative risks highlights his commitment to personal development. In every piece he creates, Jaiden not only communicates his ideas but also inspires those around him, embodying the spirit of inquiry and creativity that the IB PYP nurtures.



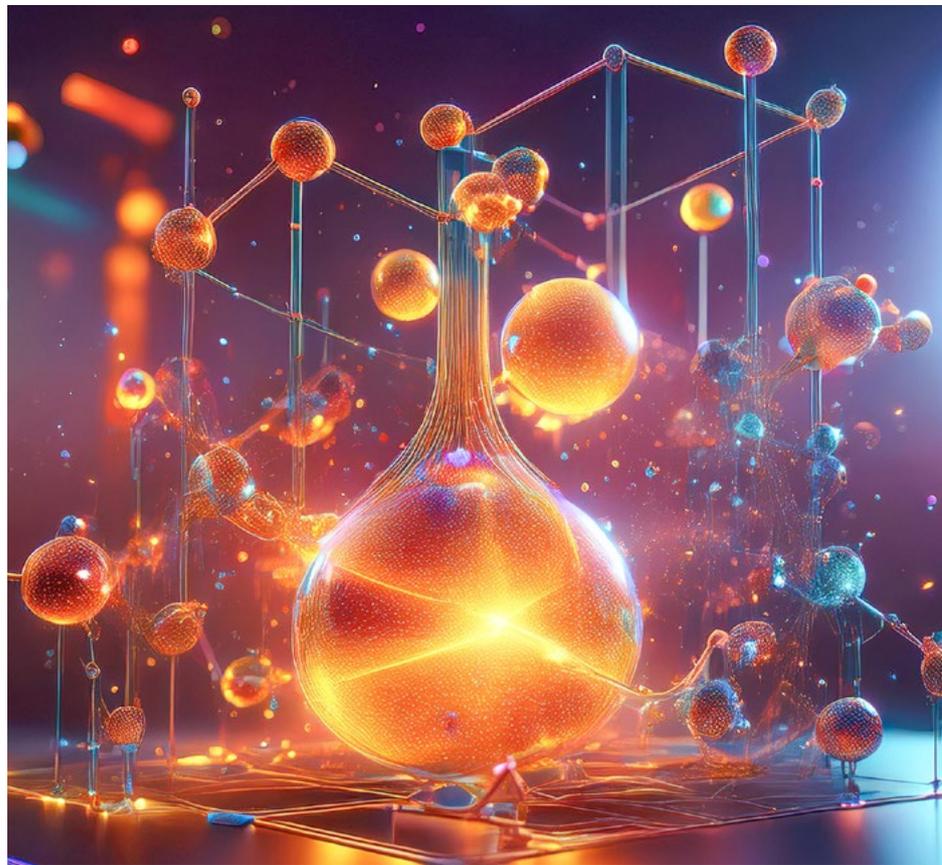
Mixed mediums and recycled paper



Mixed mediums and recycled paper



*By Stephen Linksvayer,  
Lower School Visual Arts  
Teacher at SCIS Pudong*



# How **AR** is Revolutionizing Immersive Learning Experiences

Augmented Reality (AR) has become increasingly popular in education, especially following the success of Virtual Reality (VR) in enhancing student learning. VR has proven to be an effective tool for immersive educational experiences, allowing students to engage with content in a deeper and more meaningful way. When combined, AR and VR create an even more powerful learning environment, making abstract concepts more tangible and easier to understand.

At SCIS, we have integrated Class VR lessons—purposefully designed educational experiences that explore culture, science, history, and more—with AR Merge Cubes to provide students with deeper insights into their Units of Inquiry. For example, when Grade 5 students were working on the unit Who We Are, they explored the anatomy of the heart using AR and VR. VR allowed them to observe a clear and detailed image of the heart, while AR Merge Cubes created the illusion of holding the heart in their hands. Students could maneuver the heart, closely examine its colors and textures, and study its behaviors, such as the speed at which it beats and pumps blood. This interactive approach enabled them to



gain a hands-on understanding of human anatomy that would be difficult to achieve through traditional learning methods.

Since AR provides a hands-on experience, it significantly enhances student engagement and knowledge retention. The dynamic nature of AR lessons introduces a change in pace that keeps students excited and eager to explore new concepts. By allowing students to interact with 3D models and simulations, AR fosters curiosity and encourages active participation in the learning process.

Another key benefit of AR in education is its ability to support personalized learning. Students can progress at their own pace, revisiting concepts as needed to reinforce their understanding. This flexibility is particularly beneficial for students with different learning styles, as it allows them to engage with content in a way that suits their individual needs.

Beyond the classroom, AR also has the potential to transform remote and hybrid learning experiences. Students can explore virtual environments, conduct virtual experiments, and engage in immersive educational experiences

from anywhere, making learning more accessible and engaging. Additionally, AR enhances collaboration among students, allowing them to work together on interactive projects and develop critical problem-solving skills.

As technology continues to evolve, the potential applications of AR in education are endless. From medical training to historical re-enactments and virtual science experiments, AR is revolutionizing the way students interact with and understand complex concepts. By integrating AR into the curriculum, educators can create a more engaging, interactive, and personalized learning experience that fosters curiosity, creativity, and a deeper understanding of subjects. The future of education is undoubtedly being shaped by innovative technologies like AR, making learning more dynamic, immersive, and effective for students around the world.



**By Petra Akinsola,  
Technology Integrator  
at SCIS**

# Soaring Dragons

## Leading with Purpose and Impact

At SCIS Pudong, our Grade 5 Student Leadership Committee has grown into a dynamic force within our school community. Over the past months, these young leaders have not only embraced their roles but have also taken initiative, organizing engaging events and learning valuable lessons about responsibility, teamwork, and problem-solving. Through their leadership, they continue to cultivate a culture of inclusivity, collaboration, and global awareness, preparing them to engage with challenges both within and beyond the school environment.

From hosting festive activities like a Halloween movie event with popcorn, a Christmas cookie decorating event, and school-wide Palentine's Day activities, to contributing ideas for Spirit Week, these students have taken their leadership roles to heart. They have worked together to plan and execute events, ensuring that their peers enjoy meaningful experiences while also learning the importance of community and responsibility.



### Insights from Our Young Leaders

#### 1. What does being a Head Leader mean to you? What qualities do you think make a good leader?

**Shaked:** "It means we get to help others and lead them. To help others and be a good leader, we need to show respect, be patient, and make informed decisions."

**Chelsea:** "Being a Head Leader means being responsible and ensuring everyone is safe and treated kindly. It's important not to act like a boss or be mean to others."

**Jaiden:** "To me, it means having big responsibility and being successful in terms of goals."

**Junwon:** "Being a Head Leader means I should take on a lot of responsibilities, and it also means I need to make good

choices. Qualities of a good leader include doing responsible and reasonable things at school and fulfilling the responsibilities of the position."

#### 2. How would you describe your leadership style in three words?

**Jaiden:** "Determined, caring, and hard-working."

**Yeoul:** "Respectful, kind, and caring."

#### 3. How do you hope to work with the other Head Leaders as a team?

**Yeoul:** "We can share each other's ideas respectfully, without interrupting, and compromise. It's important to be nice to the other Head Leaders and wait until they finish speaking before starting. We should respect other students' ideas."

#### 4. Can you describe a challenge you've faced as a Head Leader and how you solved it?

**Yeoul:** "At times, organizing younger students can be tricky because they have so much energy, but we've learned to work together and guide them in a way that keeps them engaged."

**Shaked:** "During Palentine's Day, I noticed that not everyone in my group was contributing equally. As a leader, I stepped in to support the team and ensure we were prepared for the event."

**Marmik:** "Sometimes, when explaining things to a group, not everyone understands right away. We've learned to be patient, clarify our instructions, and find different ways to communicate so everyone is on the same page."

**Chelsea:** "Younger students need extra support, so we've found ways to encourage them."

**Jaiden:** "When organizing events, we've realized that careful planning is key. For example, during the Halloween movie event, we ordered more popcorn than needed, so we reflected on how to improve planning for future activities."



### 5. What has been the most rewarding part of being a Head Leader so far?

**Yeoul:** "I have enjoyed going to the classes and presenting our ideas. It has been exciting to take on a leadership role and share our thoughts with others."

**Shaked:** "I have enjoyed helping and supporting little kids."

**Jaiden:** "Overall, it has been a fun and fulfilling journey."

**Junwon:** "Seeing our efforts recognized, like having an honorable mention on the Student Leadership Event boards and our pictures displayed, has been very rewarding."

**Jaiden:** "It is great to be heard and have a responsibility and show the best of myself."

**Chelsea:** "Being given extra responsibility has been a valuable experience."

### 6. How has being a leader helped you understand the importance of working with others from different backgrounds?

**Shaked:** "Being a leader has helped me organize and understand different people."

**Chelsea:** "It has taught us how to collaborate effectively and appreciate different points of view."

**Jaiden:** "It has helped me relate to others better."

**Junwon:** "I've enjoyed getting to know different people and learning how to work together as a team."

### 7. What's one goal you hope to achieve during your time as a Head Leader?

**Yeoul:** "To make our school a better place."



### Rafiqua Israel (Student Leadership Team Leader, Lower School, Pudong Campus):

"By incorporating Grade 5 students into leadership roles, SCIS is not only providing valuable opportunities for personal growth but also enriching the diversity of ideas and representation within our student leadership committee. This initiative aligns with our school's commitment to nurturing well-rounded, responsible, and proactive global citizens from an early age.

As the teachers supporting these young leaders, we've witnessed something truly remarkable unfold. These Grade 5 students have stepped up to their responsibilities in ways we couldn't have anticipated, displaying a level of maturity, communication, and principled action that continues to inspire us. What began as a group of slightly shy individuals, uncertain about their new roles, has transformed into a confident cohort of student leaders who are setting an extraordinary example for their peers.

Their growth has been nothing short of impressive. From one event to the next, they've shown an ability to reflect on their experiences, learn from challenges, and improve with each opportunity. They've proven themselves to be organized, reliable, and capable—qualities that have not only surprised us but also earned them the admiration of both their classmates and teachers. In just a short time, these students have come so far, blossoming into leaders who embody the values SCIS strives to instill. Watching them take ownership of their roles and flourish has been a powerful reminder of the potential that lies within our youngest students when given the chance to lead."





# From Curiosity to Confidence

## Nurturing Young Global Learners

Early childhood is a time of boundless curiosity, rapid development, and the formation of foundational learning experiences. At Shanghai Community International School (SCIS), early years educators strive to create an environment where young learners feel safe to explore, question, and grow. In this exclusive interview, we invited Ms. Denise Lee, a dedicated Pre-K teacher at SCIS Pudong, to discuss the philosophy behind her teaching, the power of playful learning, and how a global perspective shapes the classroom experience.

### A Leap of Faith: From Passion to Profession

Teaching young children requires more than just knowledge—it demands patience, adaptability, and above all, a deep sense of purpose. For Ms. Denise, this journey began at a very young age, guiding her to become an experienced educator with diverse roles in the early childhood industry. Her path has been one of continuous learning and transformation, fueled by her genuine enjoyment of her work. Ms. Denise is eager to share her wealth of experiences with fellow educators who are equally passionate about learning and with parents seeking to provide the best support for their children.

### Q: Please simply introduce yourself and share a bit about your teaching background and experiences.

A: I took a leap of faith by moving to Shanghai at the age of 23 to challenge myself and step out of my comfort zone. This experience allowed me to dive into the global perspective of Early Childhood Education (ECE) and understand how it varies across cultures. It's been incredibly rewarding to connect with educators and families from diverse backgrounds, and learn about their unique approaches to teaching and learning.

My journey as a preschool educator has been fulfilling in many ways. I have served as a level coordinator, leading my team in planning engaging lessons and events.

I also love mentoring new teachers and enhancing curriculum resources. Through collaboration with principals, colleagues, and parents, we have worked together to create enriching learning experiences.

### Q: What inspired you to become an educator in Early Childhood Education, and how have your past experiences shaped your teaching philosophy?

A: Being the eldest in my family—both immediate and extended—naturally gave me a sense of responsibility to guide and care for younger ones. Because of this passion, I pursued my diploma and bachelor's degree in early childhood education right after high school.

Throughout my teaching journey, I've been deeply shaped by the knowledge I've gained and the incredible educators who have inspired me. My teaching philosophy continues to evolve with every experience till today. While the world is constantly changing—whether through technology, societal shifts, or the challenges brought by the pandemic—one thing remains constant: children are, at their core, curious and pure beings who thrive on nurturing and patience. They may require different approaches to engagement, but their innate desire to learn never changes.

While these ongoing changes can present challenges for educators, those with passion and dedication will always find innovative ways to connect with their students. Compassion is the heart of effective early childhood education. It creates a safe and supportive environment where children can flourish. It's important to recognize that this journey can be more complex than it seems; a genuine passion for nurturing young minds is essential in guiding and inspiring the next generation of learners.



### The Art of Playful Learning: Where Curiosity Meets Structure

For young children, play is not just recreation—it is a critical part of how they make sense of the world. Ms. Denise believes in fostering an environment where play is both organic and thoughtfully structured, allowing children to develop problem-solving skills, social-emotional awareness, and a love for learning.

#### Q: You've been teaching at SCIS for two years now. What has surprised or inspired you the most?

A: Coming from an Asian background where rigid plans and specific requirements were the norm, I was surprised by the level of trust SCIS Pudong places in its teachers. The ability to truly teach based on children's interests was a refreshing change. The culture at SCIS fosters trust not only among educators but also with supportive parents who encourage our classroom initiatives. This environment creates the freedom to explore various teaching directions, ultimately enriching the learning experience for both me and my students.



#### Q: You emphasize the importance of playful learning, especially after the pandemic. How do you create an environment where children feel safe to explore and play freely?

A: The pandemic has posed unique challenges for young children, many of whom were introduced to the world during this time. I recently attended a session at the ACAMIS educational conference that highlighted how children today often struggle to engage in play, even with manipulatives, due to the circumstances they grew up in. As educators, we must step back and recognize that play doesn't always come naturally to them.

It is also crucial to recognize that while play may appear effortless, it is the result of meticulous planning by teachers. For playful learning to thrive, there must be an alignment between students' interests and educators' teaching goals. We intentionally create situations that seem unintentional, allowing children to engage in play. A great example is our project, "Not Just Any Zoo!" (featured in SCIS posts), which demonstrates how thoughtful planning can foster meaningful play. Let's remember that what looks like spontaneous play is often the outcome of dedicated effort and a nurturing environment crafted by educators.

### Fostering Connection and Inquiry: Building Trust, Agency, and Growth

Learning is most impactful when children feel heard, valued, and empowered to take ownership of their environment. Ms. Denise shares how she cultivates a classroom where young learners are active participants rather than passive recipients of knowledge.

#### Q: How do you build trust with such young students, making them feel safe to share their thoughts and emotions?

A: I aim to foster a relationship without hierarchy, striving to be their best friend. In

this dynamic, they feel comfortable sharing everything—from joyful moments to their strongest emotions. To demonstrate this openness, I intentionally show my own imperfections and make light of the situation, so they feel at ease about their own errors. They often laugh it off, calling me "Silly Miss Denise!" This encourages them to be vulnerable and honest, reinforcing that it's okay to express a full range of emotions. By creating an atmosphere of openness, it helps children feel safe in exploring their feelings and sharing their thoughts.

it turns out they were just expressing a desire for autonomy and involvement in their environment! Realizing this, I decided to embrace their curiosity instead and shifted my approach to invite them into the decision-making process.

Our latest big decision was to transform our nap room into a free-choice activity room, and the excitement was palpable! The children eagerly participated in deciding how to arrange the space. They chose their favorite resources, selected furniture, and even picked out mats! While reaching a consensus can take longer and disagreements may arise, the process is incredibly meaningful. The room is now a dynamic reflection of their interests, constantly evolving as they express their preferences. This collaborative effort has redefined our classroom experience. Instead of steering the wheel for them, I take a back seat, listening to their ideas and guiding them as they plan. It's a wonderful opportunity for growth—for both myself and my students—and it fosters a sense of ownership and pride in our learning environment.

#### Q: Teaching Pre-K comes with its own set of challenges. What's one challenge you've faced in your classroom, and how did you turn it into an opportunity for growth—both for yourself and your students?

A: They are always questioning my decisions! It's like having a tiny panel of critics in the classroom. I used to create new activity areas and fun resources, hoping to surprise and excite them, only to hear, "Why did you put this here?" or "Why don't we move it there?" Who knew that they were just nitpicking? Well,





### Nurturing Young Global Citizens

SCIS is committed to fostering a global mindset from the earliest years. Ms. Denise ensures that her students develop an awareness of different cultures while also recognizing their own role in a diverse, interconnected world.

#### Q: SCIS emphasizes global perspectives. How do you integrate cultural awareness into your Pre-K classroom?

A: Each child's language, cuisine, and culture are recognized and celebrated, creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued. We enjoy greeting each other with "Good Morning" in various languages, fostering a sense of unity. Our Pre-K children are also enthusiastic about learning each other's flags and discovering the distances between their countries. Additionally, we update our boards with a "Snack of the Month", which the children take pride in identifying as their own. Their curiosity leads them to ask teachers about their origins, building a supportive community based on understanding.

Recently, during our Unit of Inquiry on Adventures in Our Universe, a student shared, "In China, it's daytime, and I'm in school, but Abuela and Abuelo are sleeping now; they're in Mexico!" This engagement illustrates how they view themselves in a global context. By linking our discussions to the idea of global citizenship, we are teaching children to recognize their interconnectedness with others around the world, fostering empathy and respect for each other's unique backgrounds.

#### Q: What new projects or ideas are you excited to explore this year?

A: This year, we are filled with excitement about the opportunities for collaboration! Our teamwork promotes open-mindedness and helps develop essential social and communication skills among our students.

We have been working closely with the Academy class, and it's wonderful to see the students engaged when they observe their teachers discussing

potential joint activities. The children often enthusiastically suggest, "Maybe we can invite them to our class again!" Their excitement truly reflects the strong connections we are nurturing as a team.

It's heartwarming to witness the students interacting with one another, especially during storytelling sessions, hands-on activities, and even dance parties with the Academy students! These experiences not only enhance communication and social skills but also boost their confidence as risk-takers when presenting in front of a bigger crowd.

By fostering inquiry, play, and cultural awareness, Ms. Denise Lee is not only shaping young learners but also laying the foundation for compassionate, globally minded individuals. Her passion for teaching continues to inspire, ensuring that every child in her classroom feels seen, heard, and empowered to explore the world with confidence and curiosity.



*"Each child's language, cuisine, and culture are recognized and celebrated, creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued."*

# Navigating a Global Journey: Embracing Cultures, Learning, and Growth

For the YEUNG family, every move has been more than just a change of scenery—From Hong Kong to Los Angeles, Singapore, and finally Shanghai, each chapter of their journey has shaped their outlook on life and education. Each move brought opportunities to grow, adapt, and embrace new cultural perspectives. At SCIS, they found an environment that aligned with their values—one that fosters curiosity, embraces multiculturalism, and nurtures the potential of every child. Their children, Karson (now in Grade 3) and Karlos (now in Pre-Kindergarten) have thrived in this setting, embodying the family's commitment to raising globally-minded individuals.

In this article, the YEUNG family shared their experiences of raising globally-minded children and how their journey has shaped their family values.



## A Global Journey: The YEUNG Family's Path to SCIS

Early childhood education plays a crucial role in shaping a child's love for learning, curiosity, and ability to adapt. For the YEUNG family, choosing SCIS meant selecting a school that would provide not only academic excellence but also an environment that nurtures personal growth from the earliest years.

### Q: Can you introduce your family and share why you chose SCIS?

A: Our family is a vibrant mix of cultures and experiences. Originally from Hong Kong, my husband and I are both UCLA graduates. After several years in the United States, we moved to Singapore for work and eventually to Shanghai in 2021 during the challenging times of COVID. These transitions have shaped our family's perspective on the importance of adaptability, resilience, and embracing new opportunities.

When it came to choosing a school for our two kids, we knew we wanted an environment that would not only provide a strong academic foundation but also foster a global perspective. SCIS stood out as the perfect choice because of its commitment to multiculturalism, inquiry-based learning, and nurturing each child's unique potential.

### Q: How does SCIS support your children's individual learning styles and interests?

A: Karson and Karlos have very different personalities—Karson is outgoing and thrives in collaborative environments, while Karlos is more introspective and enjoys independent exploration. SCIS has done a fantastic job of tailoring their learning experiences to suit their individual needs. Karson excels in group projects, where he can exchange ideas and work as part of a team, while Karlos's curiosity is sparked through hands-on, play-based activities that allow him to explore at his own pace.

Beyond academics, SCIS has also been incredibly supportive in nurturing Karson's deep passion for music. He has had the opportunity to perform at school concerts and even internationally, which has been invaluable for his confidence and artistic growth.

### **Embracing Diversity: Growing and Learning at SCIS and Home**

SCIS is a thriving community where students engage with diverse perspectives every day. This exposure has played a key role in shaping Karson and Karlos's understanding of the world and strengthening their appreciation for their own cultural identity.

#### **Q: SCIS is a multicultural learning environment. How has this shaped your children's experiences?**

A: One of the most remarkable aspects of SCIS is how naturally students engage with different cultures. Karson and Karlos interact with classmates and teachers from all over the world, and this daily exposure has helped them develop an appreciation for diversity beyond what we could have imagined. A standout moment was the International Food Fair, where they helped cook and serve curry fish balls – the famous street food of Hong Kong, while enjoying food from other countries' booths, learning about their classmates' backgrounds.

#### **Q: How do you balance preserving your cultural roots while embracing new ones?**

A: At home, we have our own cultural traditions, such as celebrating Chinese New Year and Mid-Autumn

Festival, which we've carried with us from Hong Kong. We've found that these traditions provide a great opportunity to teach our kids about the importance of cultural heritage while also encouraging them to appreciate other cultures. At home, we often read books or watch movies about different countries, which sparks conversations about global perspectives.

### **A Community of Engagement: Family Involvement Beyond the Classroom**

For the YEUNG family, education is not just about what happens inside the classroom—it is about being part of a dynamic school community. Through active involvement in SCIS events and parent initiatives, they have found ways to contribute while strengthening their own sense of belonging.

#### **Q: What inspired you to get involved in the SCIS Parents and Friends Association (PAFA)?**

A: I truly believe that a strong parent-school partnership benefits the entire community. Before joining PAFA, I was the room parent for Karlos's Preschool class last year. Being a room parent was such a rewarding experience – it allowed me to involve myself in helping with class activities and gave me more opportunities to understand the learning environment, teaching styles, and the kids' involvement in the classroom. It was inspiring to see how the teachers fostered a nurturing and engaging environment where every child felt valued and encouraged to explore their interests. These experiences deepened my appreciation for the SCIS community and motivated me to take on a more active role in PAFA.

#### **Q: How do you encourage your children's interests outside of school?**

A: At home, we encourage our kids to explore their interests through books, videos, and hands-on activities. For example, when Karson became interested in airplanes, we got him some airplane models, watched videos about aircraft, and even spoke with our pilot friend to learn more about aviation. Karlos, on the other hand, developed an interest in trains. During our past holidays, we explored the high-speed trains in China and visited a train museum in Tokyo. These experiences sparked his curiosity and helped him connect his interests to real-world discoveries.

#### **Q: What role does your family play in supporting your children's learning journey?**

A: We prioritize open communication with teachers to understand how we can best support our children's growth. At home, we integrate learning into daily life—whether it's through reading together, playing educational games, or cooking meals from different cultures. Our goal is to create an environment where curiosity is encouraged and learning feels like a natural part of everyday life.





As a family, we actively support our children's learning journey by maintaining open communication with their teachers and engaging in "family relaxing time," where we read, play educational games, watch the news, and reflect on the day. One of our favorite activities is cooking together—exploring different cuisines like Japanese sushi, Korean fried chicken, and Italian pizza, Western-style pasta, while also preparing traditional dishes like Hong Kong-style pineapple buns and egg tarts, Singapore Hainanese chicken, and Chinese mapo tofu. These cooking sessions are not just about food—they're a way for us to bond as a family and help the kids stay connected to their roots while exploring new flavors.

### Shaping Global Citizens: Hopes for the Future

Looking ahead, the YEUNG family envisions a future where their children continue to grow into compassionate, curious, and globally aware individuals. They believe SCIS plays a key role in preparing students to engage meaningfully with the world.

#### Q: What is something new your children recently learned that surprised you?

A: Karlos recently explored the theme of Sharing the Planet in a unit focused on growing plants. He was fascinated to learn that plants need more than just soil, water, and sunlight—they also need time, care, and patience. A visit to the local flower market helped reinforce these lessons, and since then, he has been eager to check on his plants every day. It was wonderful to see how much he grasped about the interconnectedness of nature, and it really showed how SCIS helps children connect their learning to the real world.

#### Q: Have you noticed your children developing an understanding of global issues?

A: Recently, they surprised us with their growing awareness of global events and figures. While watching the news, they noticed the new U.S. President on

screen and asked questions about his role in the world. Similarly, during a discussion about space exploration, they were fascinated by how SpaceX was developed and its impact on the future of technology and space travel. These moments showed us how their understanding of global leadership, innovation, and interconnectedness is expanding every day.

#### Q: What are your hopes for your children as they continue their journey at SCIS?

A: Our expectations for our children go beyond academic success. We hope they develop a global mindset - one that embraces diversity, understands global issues, and approaches challenges with empathy and creativity. SCIS has been instrumental in shaping this mindset, and we are excited to see how they continue to flourish in this environment.

For the YEUNG family, SCIS is not just a school—it is an integral part of their children's growth and their family's journey. Their experiences at SCIS have strengthened their global perspective, deepened their connections within the community, and supported their children's development into thoughtful, engaged global citizens. As they continue this journey, they look forward to the new opportunities and discoveries that lie ahead.



# *SCIS Pudong Basketball Recap*





The varsity Girls' Basketball Team had a great season this year, improving on last year's performance by all metrics. With a young returning core assuming veteran roles, led by Allison, Mika, Francesca, and Jazmin, the girls finished second place in the Pudong division. Returning players Vania, Athena, and Wendy also assumed key roles in the team's success, demonstrating hard work, determination, and a strong team-first mentality. Meanwhile, first-year members Ariana, Giovana, Nina, and Andrea

made great progress throughout the season, contributing greatly to the team's aggressive defense, which was the heart of the team's identity. After a tough loss in the SISAC semi-finals, the girls earned fourth place in the Shanghai season-ending tournament. This was a great performance playing against the best teams across Shanghai. To wrap up the season, the girls traveled to Boston International School in Wuxi for ACAMIS. While they weren't entirely satisfied with their fifth-place finish, they earned the Spirit of ACAMIS award

for honoring the spirit of the game, good sportsmanship, and comradery off the court with the other teams.

#### Great season, Dragons!



*Written by Harry Brookfield, Athletics, Activities, Aquatics & Expeditions Coordinator, Head of Physical and Health Education*

## DI Girls Basketball team

By Coach Tyler Harding

The Girls DI basketball season was a testament to hustle and determination. From the first whistle to the final buzzer, the team showcased relentless effort. Each player demonstrated an unwavering commitment to improving individually and as a unit. Whether it was diving for loose balls, fighting for rebounds, or never giving up on a fast break, their hustle was evident at every turn. The girls played with heart, battling through tough losses and celebrating hard-earned victories. They grew not only as athletes but also as leaders, supporting one another through every challenge. The season was filled with highs and lows, but the constant was the unwavering determination to keep pushing forward.

I'm so proud of what this team was able to accomplish, not just for their basketball skills but for the spirit and dedication they brought to the game this season.

A special thank you to our five graduating seniors—Sarah, Sam, Jenny, Isa, and Ines. They have not only been leaders on the court but role models for the younger players, they have been the heart of this team, and their leadership will leave a lasting impact. Their dedication to the team has inspired us all, and they will be deeply missed.



# SCIS Hongqiao



## DI Boys Basketball team

By Coach Andre Sun

The DI basketball season can be described as a roller-coaster ride! With six returning players accompanied by six new players, one would think it would take our dragons some time to learn how to play together as a unit. However, from day one, everyone believed in our identity as a defensive counterattack unit. The team flourished during the regular season, going undefeated against all opponents, which was awarded by not only being the regular season champion in Shanghai, but also gold medalists in the SISAC tournament. Though momentum was with us, as a team we faced difficulties in continuing our success on the first day during the ACAMIS tournament. However, we quickly regrouped and won three out of four games to bring back bronze from HIS, the same team that beat us a year ago for bronze as well. I am truly proud of the players for their dedication and growth throughout the season. I cannot wait for next year, to see our Upper School gym overflowing with support from the great SCIS community!

## D2 Girls Basketball team

By Coach Kirk Thomas

This year, our D2 Girls Basketball team had a diverse group of players, many of whom were new to the game. From our very first practice, the girls demonstrated remarkable spirit and energy. Their determination to learn and improve was truly inspiring.

Although we faced some tough losses at the beginning of the SISAC regular season against more experienced teams, the growth in their skills and teamwork was evident as the season progressed. Securing a dominant win over Suzhou was a highlight, and reaching the SISAC Cup Final as the 4th seed from the west was a fantastic accomplishment. While our record in the tournament may not reflect it, the valuable experiences gained will serve our team well in the future.

Congratulations to every member of the team! Your attitude, enthusiasm, and commitment made this season memorable, and I am grateful for all your hard work.



# Basketball Recap

## D2 Boys Basketball team

By Coach: Sy Prescott

The Boys D2 Basketball team had an incredible season and journey of growth, determination, and teamwork. This season, our players have demonstrated resilience, grit, and an unwavering commitment to each other, both on and off the court. Every practice was a testament to their dedication, as they consistently pushed themselves to improve their skills and understanding of the game. This team is truly special, and their heart—whether it's diving for loose balls, supporting teammates, or staying after practice to perfect their craft—shines through. The team made sure to give it their all and displayed what it means to be a SCIS Dragon. We embodied sportsmanship and leadership, representing our school with pride in every game. Wins and losses are important, but it's the lessons learned and the character built that will carry these young athletes forward. This team did not just have a strong season—they're building a legacy of hard work, unity, and excellence.



# SCIS Alumni Unpacked: Insights on University, Life, and Global Perspectives



SCIS alumni are no strangers to crossing borders, adapting to new cultures, and navigating international environments. As part of our ongoing tradition of welcoming graduates back to campus, a group of alumni visited SCIS to hold a workshop with Grade 12 students. Among them, three alumni—Suhani (Cornell University, Class of 2024), Noemie (University College London, Class of 2024), and Thomas (McGill University, Class of 2021)—sat down for a deeper conversation about their university journeys and how SCIS prepared them for the world beyond.

## A Foundation for Global Readiness

Reflecting on their time at SCIS, the alumni emphasized how the school's diverse and supportive environment shaped their ability to thrive in university.



Noemie, who joined SCIS in Grade 3, shared how the school's annual UN Day played a key role in shaping her understanding of diversity. "It was such a special experience to see everyone express and showcase their cultures, which really shaped my perception of diversity and understanding different cultures." Now studying Social Science at UCL, she finds that the open-mindedness she developed at SCIS continues to shape the way she interacts with people from around the world.

Suhani echoed this sentiment, emphasizing how SCIS cultivated global awareness through collaboration and real-world engagement. "One life skill that SCIS really helped me with is understanding and working with people from different backgrounds. When we go abroad and study, we're surrounded by people from all over the world. Experiencing that during high school made it so much easier to handle at university." As an Industry and Labor Relations major at Cornell, she credits her ability to engage with diverse perspectives to the friendships and discussions she had at SCIS.

Beyond the social and cultural impact, Noemie also highlighted SCIS's holistic approach to education. "It wasn't just memorizing things. We had group projects and a lot of moments where we could collaborate with others, which

helped me build my interpersonal skills—something I'm going to keep for the rest of my life."

## The Moments That Made SCIS Special

While academics played a crucial role in preparing them for university, the alumni also reflected on the experiences that made their SCIS journey unforgettable.

For Suhani, the strongest memories were of times when the community came together. "On China trips, we'd be with our friends, have the freedom to do things we enjoyed, but also be put into new experiences. I remember last year, when we were working on our university applications on a China trip, it was obviously a very stressful time. But doing it together, supporting each other, made it a lot easier."

For Thomas, who joined SCIS in Grade 11, the strongest bonds were built through sports and shared activities. "My favorite memory was going on China trips with the entire grade. It was a great experience to bond with other students and explore China at the same time." Now studying Computer Science at McGill, he still looks back fondly on those moments. "What I miss most is definitely basketball during lunchtimes—playing with the boys, and the tournaments we had with the team. Those times made my SCIS experience really special."

### Advice for the Learning Journey

When asked what advice they would share, the alumni had a common message: embrace every opportunity and connect with those around you.

Suhani encouraged students to make the most of the tight-knit community. "Reach out to everyone. You'll have a friend group for sure, but talk to everyone in your classes. In IB, your academics get harder, and you learn to lean on different people. I didn't have any close friends in my economics class, but that didn't mean I didn't talk to people. Reaching out helps you build new friendships and learn in ways you wouldn't expect."

Noemie emphasized the importance of seeking support from teachers. "Faculty and staff at SCIS are incredibly helpful. Going to teachers and asking for advice on any project was something I appreciated so much. They truly want to see you thrive—not just academically, but in other aspects of life as well."

Beyond SCIS, these insights apply to anyone navigating new environments—whether in university, a new workplace, or an unfamiliar country. Being open to new perspectives, forming meaningful



connections, and taking initiative in learning are skills that extend far beyond the classroom.

### Carrying the SCIS Spirit Forward

As our alumni continue their journeys across the globe, they carry with them not only the academic foundation they built at SCIS but also the values of collaboration, adaptability, and global understanding. The experiences they gained—whether in the

classroom, on school trips, or through personal connections—have played a significant role in shaping their university experiences and will continue to influence their paths in the years to come. As they move forward, we look forward to seeing how they use these skills and perspectives to make meaningful contributions to a dynamic, interconnected world.



# THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

### Alumni Mission:

The SCIS Alumni Association has been established in order to foster the continued cordial relations of the SCIS community. Its goal was, and continues to be, to link alumni with the School and with each other, and to support and maintain such forged relationships. It strives to provide ample avenues and opportunities to encourage alumni to participate actively in the SCIS community.

### Alumni Contact:

[alumni@scis-china.org](mailto:alumni@scis-china.org)

### Alumni Requirements:

1. Graduated from a SCIS Campus
- OR
2. Went to school here for at least one year AND be over 18



### Social Media

Facebook site:  
<https://www.facebook.com/alumniSCIS/>



LinkedIn site:  
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4757677>

# A Taste of the World

## How SCIS's International Cooking Club Builds a Global Community

In an increasingly interconnected world, the ability to appreciate and understand diverse cultures is more important than ever. At Shanghai Community International School (SCIS), the parent-led International Cooking Club embodies this spirit of global connection. Through food, families from various backgrounds come together, creating an enriching environment where traditions are shared, friendships are formed, and a deeper understanding of the world is cultivated—one dish at a time.



Cooking Club Potluck at School



Charmaine with Her Ikebana Flower Arrangement – Japanese Cooking Class



Paella, Anyone?



A Dia De Los Muertos Celebration

### A Bridge Between Cultures

For Charmaine Chen, a longtime SCIS parent, the Cooking Club is more than just a culinary experience—it's a journey through different cultures. "Food is a bridge that helps you understand local traditions," she says. "It's not just about learning to cook something—when the host shares their stories, you get to know the special occasions or festivals where these dishes are enjoyed."

This idea of food as a cultural connector is evident in how dishes from around the world often share similarities despite their geographic origins. "Take Chinese dumplings, for example—you'll find similar dishes all over the world, with dough wrapped around a filling, just called something different," Charmaine points out. This realization fosters a sense of global interconnectedness, showing how different cultures are linked in unexpected ways.

Beyond the food itself, the club provides a unique space for relaxation and connection. "With the daily chaos of life, it's hard to find time to just breathe," Charmaine reflects. "The Cooking Club is a great place to slow things down and enjoy the moment. The best part is the friendships—chatting, cooking, and laughing together makes it so much fun."





Dumplings Masterclass



Irene's Turrón



**Cooking Through Challenges**

The origins of the SCIS International Cooking Club traced back to a time when social connections were harder to maintain. Irene Fiol, who has been with the Cooking Club from the beginning, recalls how the club was born during the COVID-19 pandemic. "People weren't able to enjoy our International Food Fair or other big gatherings," she explains. "A few parents came up with the idea of connecting our international community through food, even if it meant meeting in small groups."

Since its start in October 2020, the club has flourished, growing to over 110 members. Parents take turns hosting cooking sessions, offering a glimpse into their home cuisines. From making Spanish paella to shaping Chinese tangyuan for the Lantern Festival, each session is an opportunity to step into another culture's kitchen and learn not only recipes but also the traditions and stories behind them.

Irene, originally from Mallorca, Spain, has hosted multiple times, bringing a taste of the Mediterranean to the SCIS community. "The first time I hosted was in May 2021. We made paella, a Spanish omelet, pa amb tomàquet, and trempó—a simple summer salad from my hometown," she recalls. Since then, her kitchen has welcomed parents eager to experience Spanish cuisine, with dishes like turrón (Christmas sweets) becoming an annual tradition.

**Preparing for a Global Future**

Beyond the joy of cooking and eating, the club serves a deeper purpose: preparing individuals to engage with the world in a meaningful way. Learning to appreciate diverse perspectives through something as universal as food fosters empathy, adaptability, and cultural awareness—essential skills for addressing global challenges.

In a world where collaboration across cultures is key, the SCIS International Cooking Club proves that the kitchen is more than a place for preparing meals—it's a space for building a global community. And as long as there are stories to tell and recipes to share, the club will continue to bring people together, one dish at a time.

*By May Botha, PAFA Communications at SCIS Hongqiao*



# Our SCIS Children: Global Students and Citizens of the World

As parents, we are always seeking the best opportunities and education for our children. We are eager to find the best school that meets our needs, and we feel grateful and satisfied when we make all the efforts to achieve the goal of putting all the tools for our children to take and use wisely in order to develop the skills to walk through the hallway that is leading them to success and happiness.

This time, I want to talk about my family's experience as part of the beautiful global community of SCIS Pudong.

Years ago, when we were living in our country, we used to study and learn deeply about globalization. In the past, we typically related that term to business, imports, exports, and investments. However, after moving to Shanghai, we started to experience globalization in a different way—one that involved us as human beings and as a family, immersed in a global environment that exposed us to a variety of traditions, beliefs, norms, values, interests, and perceptions. This experience has transformed us in an unimaginable way and has allowed us to reach a level of consciousness and development that we would not have been able to picture before moving here.

As a SCIS parent, I have seen my children become global students. I have had the valuable opportunity to be part of different school activities, witnessing the access that our children have to the universe of knowledge about the world in all its dimensions. Even my five-year-old, who is currently a kindergartner, talks about philosophic concepts, religions, and traditions from around the world, scientific experiments, global warming, nature, and some other global topics that have caught his attention and awakened his curiosity for further research. He has





even learned vocabulary in different languages to express friendship, admiration, and respect for his friends, who come from India, Japan, China, Canada, Israel, and other countries.

And what to say about my 13-year-old son, who surprises me with his research skills, his fluent learning processes, and his courageous approach to the knowledge of the world, which he has made his own in a natural way, through the understanding of the global realities.

As part of the SCIS Pudong Community, we feel as if we are in a worldwide forum where global perspectives are built, accessible, and tangible for us. While in the past, we used to study the countries through Geography lessons and world history through Humanities lessons; today our children interact on a daily basis with peers from those countries, who might have experienced or witnessed either themselves or their parents or relatives, some chapters of the world history in their own countries. The interaction and exchange of knowledge and experiences build, enrich, and globalize our social, political, and economic perception of the world.

SCIS has been the bridge that brings our children closer to the world—helping them to know it, understand it, and love it without fear.

With that in mind, I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to SCIS for this life-changing experience for my family because I am convinced that in this beautiful journey that began at SCIS, my children have become citizens of the world.

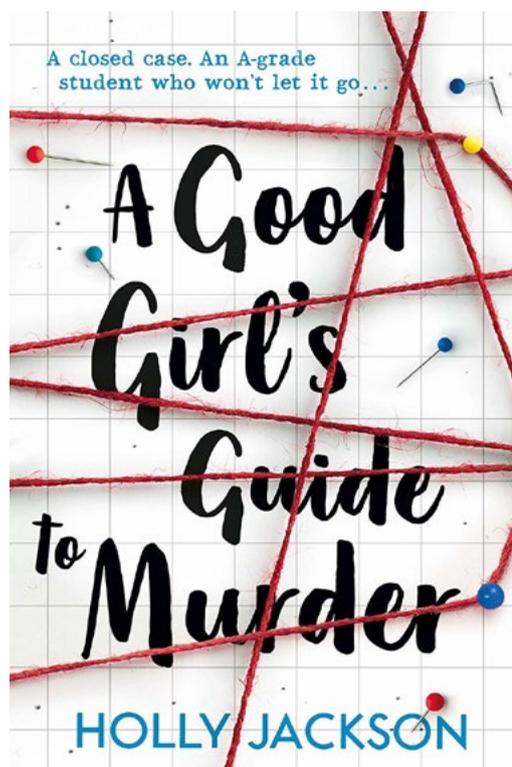
*By Maria Jose Verduzco,  
PAFA Communications at SCIS Pudong*

**“SCIS has been the bridge that brings our children closer to the world—helping them to know it, understand it, and love it without fear.”**

# Book Recommendations for All Ages

Books are a handy resource packed with information, insights into a happy life, life lessons, love, fear, and lots of advantageous instruction. Books open doors to a world of ingenuity, creativity, and resourcefulness. And stories are an integral part of our lives. They talk about history, mythology, our beliefs, our inspirations, and the possibilities of our future, the list is endless. Read below the book recommendations for all ages from our very own SCIS librarians:

Shared by Ashley Simmons, Upper School Librarian  
& IB Extended Essay Coordinator



## *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*

By Holly Jackson

Ages: 13-19

Make sure not to start reading this when it's late because you will stay up all night without being able to peel your eyes away. Even if you wanted to sleep, you'd still have goosebumps. This book follows a 17-year-old student who unravels an unsettling murder case. But she doesn't know there are many loose ties, and people would do anything to stop her from revealing them. Along the way, she makes new connections with the family of the alleged killer, learning new perspectives and gaining new friendships.

Written by Nathalie, Grade 9

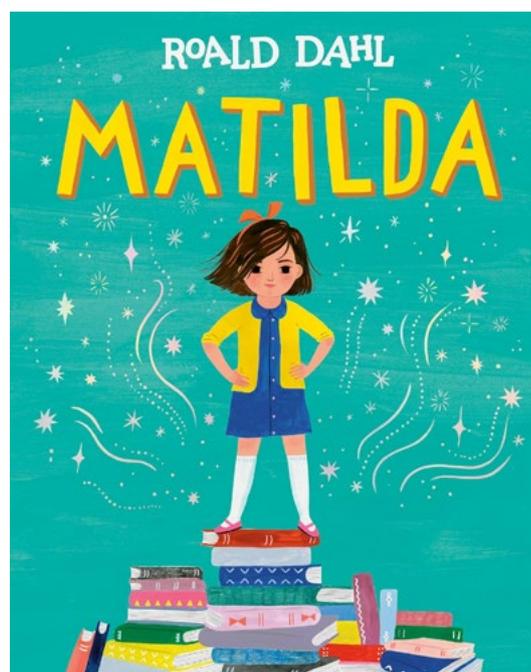
## *Matilda*

By Roald Dahl

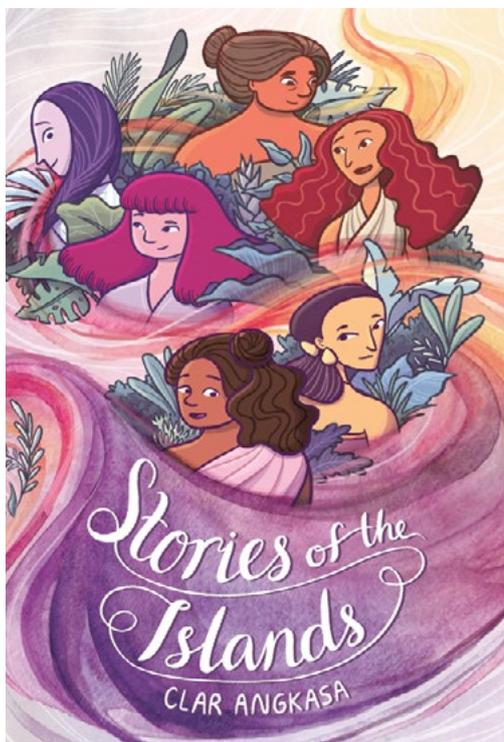
Ages 8+

If you happen to see "Matilda" in the library, make sure to check it out. "Matilda" is a great humorous fantasy book with whimsical illustrations, perfect for fans of humorous adventures with a touch of magic involved. Follow Matilda, a young genius, as she navigates a new school with a fearsome headmistress, a kind teacher, challenging parents, and a newfound superpower.

Written by Emily, Grade 9



## Malia Heil, Library & Media Specialist at SCIS Pudong



### **Stories of the Islands**

By Clar Angkasa

Age 8+

Folk tales are one of the best ways to learn about another culture, and this collection proves that. These three short stories, which originate from Indonesia, show how similar and different we all are. The first begins with sibling rivalry, the second with a blended family, and the third with a lonely woman encountering a monster. While showcasing the myths, values, and ways of life in these islands, universal themes emerge: jealousy, compassion, grief, resilience, courage, and love. The overall effect of this graphic novel is a sense of global connection simultaneous with cultural understanding.



### **The Wish Giver**

By Bill Brittain

Age 10+

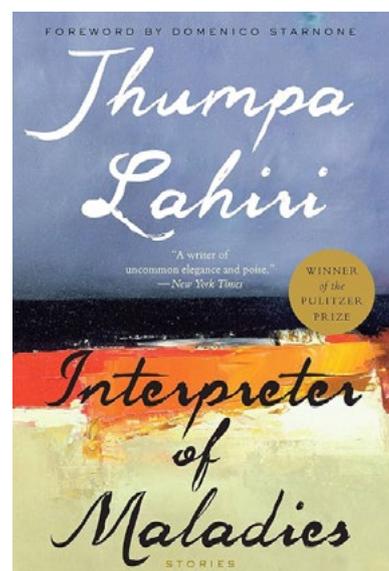
This timeless tale of magic explores the immediacy of human wants. When given the option to get anything you wish for, what would you ask? This story follows three characters and their granted wishes, which, of course, include additional results they didn't anticipate. By getting what they want, will the characters realize what they already have—and what they truly need?

### **Interpreter of Maladies**

By Jhumpa Lahiri

Age 15+

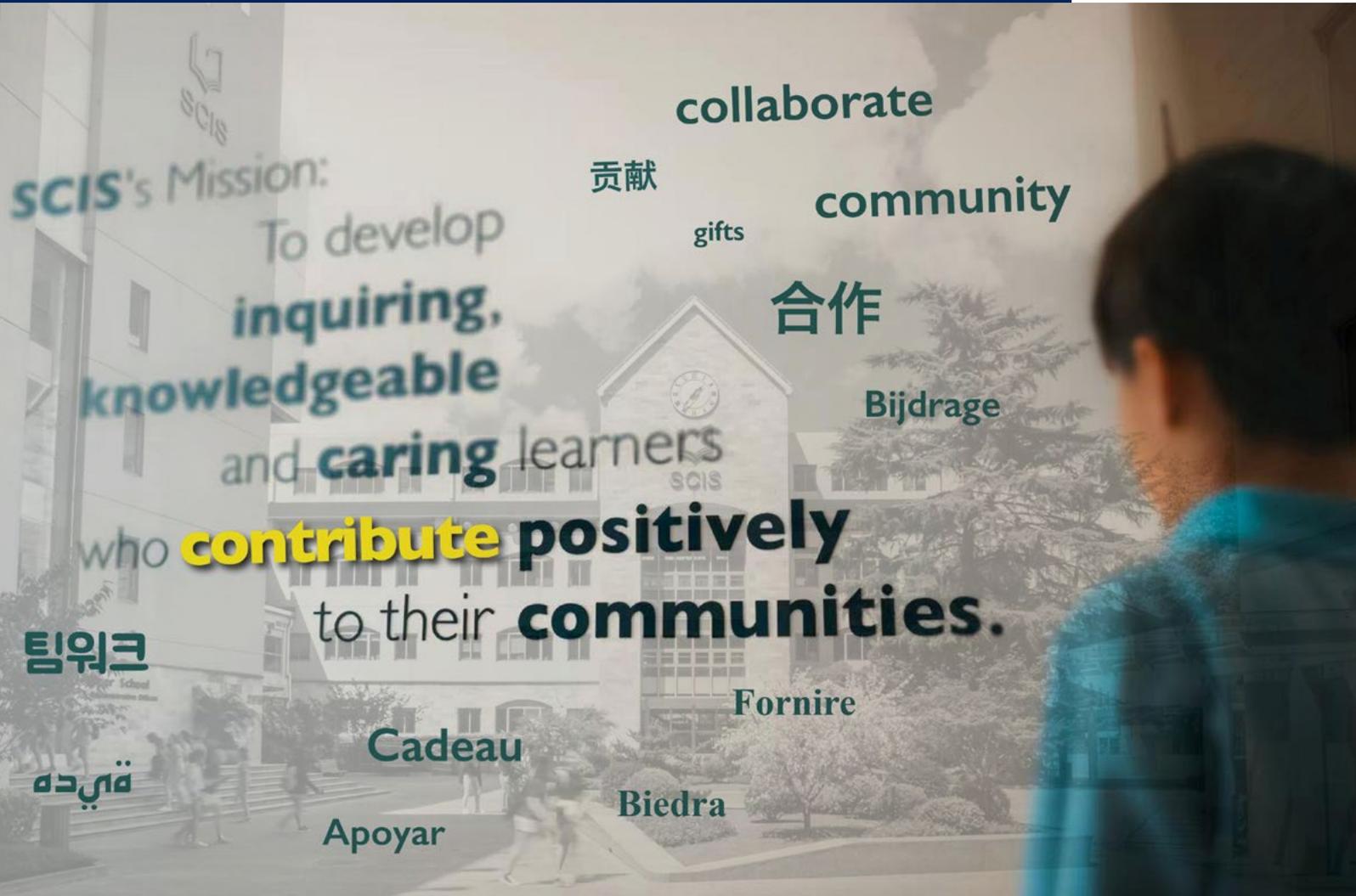
This collection of nine short stories won the Pulitzer Prize because of its brilliant storytelling. One unifying trait in all the stories is the tension between Indian and Western cultures. Lahiri shows this challenge of cultural acclimation by drawing on her own experiences, but the stories resonate for anyone who has ever felt out of place or misinterpreted. Each narrative stands alone with memorable characters, captivating descriptions, and an uncanny understanding and portrayal of everyday human emotions.



*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” - Margaret Mead*



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